



Columbia University  
in the City of New York

LIBRARY









CONSTABLE'S MISCELLANY,  
VOL. XLV.

---

On the 15th August will appear, in one Volume, illustrated  
with Engravings,

THE NATURAL HISTORY  
OF  
SELBORNE,

BY THE LATE  
REV. GILBERT WHITE, A.M.  
FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

---

A NEW EDITION, WITH ADDITIONS.

---

EDINBURGH:  
CONSTABLE AND CO., 19, WATERLOO PLACE;  
AND HURST, CHANCE, AND CO., LONDON.



HISTORY  
OF  
REMARKABLE CONSPIRACIES.



**CONSTABLE'S MISCELLANY**  
(OF)  
*Original and Selected Publications*  
(IN THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS)  
— OF —  
**LITERATURE, SCIENCE, & THE ARTS.**  
VOL. XLIII.  
**CONSPIRACIES VOL. I.**



Drawn by D. O'Hill

Eng<sup>d</sup> by W. Miller

GOWRIE HOUSE.

**EDINBURGH:**  
PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE & CO EDINBURGH;  
AND HURST, CHANCE & CO LONDON.  
1829.



HISTORY  
OF  
REMARKABLE CONSPIRACIES  
CONNECTED WITH  
EUROPEAN HISTORY,  
DURING  
THE FIFTEENTH, SIXTEENTH, AND  
SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES.

BY  
JOHN PARKER LAWSON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ARCHBISHOP LAUD."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH:  
PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE AND CO.  
AND HURST, CHANCE, AND CO. LONDON.

1829.

PRINTED BY J. HUTCHISON,  
FOR THE HEIRS OF D. WILLISON.

1831



# CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

---

	Page
<b>I.—THE ASSASSINATION OF JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND, A. D. 1437, IN THE BLACKFRIARS' MONASTERY, PERTH.</b>	
Chapter I. . . . .	15
Chapter II. . . . .	26
Chapter III. . . . .	33
Chapter IV. . . . .	49
<b>II.—THE DEATH OF JAMES III. OF SCOTLAND, A. D. 1488.</b>	
Chapter I. . . . .	65
Chapter II. . . . .	80
Chapter III. . . . .	104
<b>III.—THE CONSPIRACY OF JOHN LEWIS FIESCO, COUNT OF LAVAGNA, AGAINST GENOA, A. D. 1547.</b>	
Introductory Notice, . . . . .	137
The Conspiracy of John Lewis Fiesco, . . . .	143
<b>IV.—THE DEATH OF DON CARLOS SON OF PHILIP II. OF SPAIN, A. D. 1588.</b>	
The Death of Don Carlos, . . . . .	209
<b>V.—THE GOWRIE CONSPIRACY, A. D. 1600; INCLUDING THE RAID OF RUTHVEN, 1582.</b>	
Chapter I.—1. The Raid of Ruthven, . . . .	223
Chapter II.—2. The Gowrie Conspiracy, . . .	269
Chapter III. . . . .	290

147351.



## PREFACE.

---

IN laying this Work before the Public, my object has been to give as luminous a view as my limits would permit, of the causes of the various enterprises narrated in these volumes.

It is necessary to observe, that in the account of the Assassination of James I., I have followed the document inserted in the first volume of Pinkerton's History, which that historian has himself used. The death of James III. cannot be well understood, without giving a brief sketch of his eventful reign; and although I have perhaps dwelt longer on it than was absolutely necessary, as it is a very important period of our national history, it could not be avoided, without making any account of the lamentable end of that monarch imperfect. It has no other pretensions than that of being a compilation of facts; yet history, after all, must of necessity be a compilation.

The Conspiracy of Fiesco against Genoa, is reprinted. As I have prepared an introductory notice in its proper place, it is unnecessary to repeat my observations here.

The Death of Don Carlos is a mere sketch, compiled from various sources, of an affair so involved, that it is extremely difficult to separate truth from fable. It has been variously treated by the friends and enemies of Philip, and has afforded a theme for the inventions of poets and romancers. But, in whatever light it is viewed it will never be forgotten, that the fate of that Prince is the groundwork of one of Schiller's Tragedies, of one of Otway's great efforts, and of one of the finest pieces of historical romance by the Abbé St Real.

The Gowrie Conspiracy is certainly one of the most mysterious events recorded in history, and to it I would beg the attention of the reader. I have taken, doubtless, a peculiar view of it, as connected with the events of that period ; but such subjects are now open to discussion, and every individual is entitled to hold his own opinion. Fortunately, all doubt as to the reality of the Conspiracy is ended, by the recent discovery

of the *Original Letters* of Logan of Restalrig, in the Register-Office, Edinburgh. To ROBERT PITCAIRN, Esq., the able Editor of the Criminal Trials, I am under very great obligations, for having put into my hands a mass of interesting documents connected with this Conspiracy, hitherto unpublished, and of which I have made as much use as my limits would permit. Indeed the latter part of the narrative is almost wholly prepared from these documents, and from the subsequent proceedings of the government contained in that splendid work, “The Acts of the Parliament of Scotland” recently printed by the command of his present Majesty.

The second volume must speak for itself. It is not too much to say, that its contents will be found perhaps more interesting than the first; and it is hoped, that, altogether, these portions of history, in which human character and adventure are brought so conspicuously before the reader, as illustrative of what men have hazarded for the accomplishment of ambitious projects, or to gratify revenge, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

J. P. L.

EDINBURGH, *July* 1829.



I.

THE  
ASSASSINATION  
OF  
JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND,  
ANNO 1437,  
IN THE  
BLACKFRIARS' MONASTERY,  
PERTH.





THE  
ASSASSINATION  
OF  
JAMES I. OF SCOTLAND.

---

CHAPTER I.

Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,  
All but the page prescribed, their present state :  
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know,  
Or who would suffer being here below ?  
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,  
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?  
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,  
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.

POPE.

FROM the death of Robert III. in 1405, till 1586, —a period of one hundred and eighty-one years— it was the misfortune of Scotland to be governed by a succession of minors. The consequences in a rude and turbulent age, and among a people completely under the control of their feudal superiors, may be easily conceived. The progress of im-

provement and civilization was restrained ; domestic broils, and the evils of factious ambition, completely depressed the spirit of the nation.

At no period of Scottish history, perhaps, were these more apparent than when James, the first of that name, acceded to the government, after a captivity of nineteen years in England. The feeble reign of Robert III. had abundantly encouraged the spirit of faction ; and the infamous murder of the unfortunate Rothsay at Falkland, by Ramorny and his associates, who were suborned by the Duke of Albany and the Earl of Douglas, is a proof of the weakness of Robert's administration, and the unprincipled ambition of his relatives. The imprisonment of James in England rendered a regency necessary ; and Robert's own brother, the Duke of Albany, by various arts and crimes, obtained the administration of the government, which he held for thirteen years with a vigour rarely witnessed at his great age. \* His son Murdac succeeded—a regent of a different character, weak, indolent, and remiss in his authority, who was maintained in his brief regency of four years solely by the peculiar circumstances of the times.

It was the misfortune of James I. that he lived at that period ; for a prince he was worthy of a better age and a more enlightened and civilized kingdom. His imprisonment in England had not been without its advantages, and the greatest care had been bestowed on his education. In him, after two feeble reigns, and two regencies equally inactive, the House of Stuart was at last to

\* The Duke of Albany was approaching his 70th year when he became regent.

know a sovereign—a prince as distinguished for his mental as he was for his personal accomplishments—"a man of science and learning, an excellent poet, a master of music:—illustrious in every personal virtue, free from any personal vice, his very amusements adorned his character,—his hours of leisure being frequently dedicated to elegant writing, and miniature painting, to mechanical arts, and to the cultivation of the garden and the orchard." \*

As it is not my province here to discuss the state of Scotland when James assumed the government, I shall pass at once, after a few historical notices, to the narration of the tragedy which terminated the existence of the most accomplished prince of his age. After a number of salutary regulations, James soon astonished the nobles by his bold proceedings. His first act was to humble the ambitious family of Albany; and in a Parliament held at Perth, 1425, he arrested the Duke of Albany, his two sons, the Earls of Lennox, Douglas, Angus, and March, Sir Robert Graham, and more than twenty barons of great power. Some of these were afterwards released, but a full measure of revenge was in reserve for Albany and his sons. Seated on the throne of justice, James himself presided at their trial; and among the jury were some of those whom he had formerly ordered to be arrested. By this jury, Murdac of Albany, Duncan Earl of Lennox

\* Pinkerton, vol. i. p. 109.—The Poems of James I. are well known, and evince his great abilities. His *King's Quair*, *Christ's Kirk of the Grene*, and *Peeblis to the Play*, are to be found in almost every collection.

his father-in-law, and his two sons, were condemned. Walter, the late Regent's eldest son, was beheaded on the very day of his condemnation; and on the following day, Albany himself, Alexander his second son, and the Earl of Lennox, were led out to execution. It was a severe, though, perhaps, a just retribution; yet the vulgar beheld it not without commiseration. The former authority of Albany, the venerable age of Lennox, then approaching his eightieth year, and the noble appearance of the third, excited those feelings which invariably result from the sight of greatness in misfortune. \*

But the execution of these noblemen brought for a while peace to Scotland; and James applied himself still farther to the improvement and civilization of his subjects. Many wise and efficient laws were enacted, while the boldness and vigour of the administration seemed to check all disposition to faction and turbulence. But the schemes of the King for the humbling of the nobility were observed with rancorous and malignant hatred; and there were those among them who had resolved to rid themselves of a sovereign before whom they trembled, divested of their power and feudal greatness, opposed by a vigour which Bruce himself, the restorer of the Scottish monarchy, had only once presumed to exercise, and which even to him had well nigh proved fatal.

It was thus, while James I. was proceeding with a boldness and determination which astonished his nobility, and which amounted even to rashness, a confederacy was secretly forming, the con-

\* The execution was at Stirling, and they were all buried in the Church of the Blackfriars there.

trivers of which had for their object the dethroning of the King, and the elevation of another to his throne. Unfortunately for James, his summary revenge on the family of Albany had rendered him exposed to such dangerous associations. While the nobles were exasperated at his proceedings, and alleged that avarice, and not justice, prompted him to procure so many confiscations, the people were no less disposed to view with displeasure the subsidies levied from them, which they had hitherto been unaccustomed to advance, not perceiving that a king without a treasury must necessarily become the tool of faction, and unable to maintain the exigencies of state; and as those subsidies had not been exacted from them in former reigns, although attached to their sovereign, they were disposed to view his government as tyrannical. No inconsiderable murmurings, therefore, existed among them, while a few of the nobles were conspiring together to recover their former power and independence.

Certain circumstances occurred, which proved favourable to the designs of the confederates. James, by his marriage with Joanna, a daughter of the royal house of Lancaster, \* a lady who had been long the object of his affections during his captivity in England, had formed various leagues with that kingdom for a certain number of years, which had been renewed at the expiration of the allotted periods. These truces or leagues

\* Joanna was daughter of the Duchess of Clarence, niece of Richard II., by her first husband John Duke of Somerset, fourth son of John of Gaunt, or Ghent, Duke of Lancaster. The marriage of James and Joanna was celebrated in the church of St Mary Overy, Southwark.

had been generally well observed, with the exception of the usual maraudings on the Borders, till the year 1435, when the treaty then existing was infringed on the part of England. In support of some of those who had opposed the King's authority, and who had been exiled in consequence, Sir Robert Ogle the Younger entered Scotland at the head of a considerable force, and committed several ravages in the southern counties. He was opposed, however, by the Earl of Angus, Hepburn of Hailes, and Ramsay of Dalhousie; and, after a battle, in which upwards of forty men were slain, he was defeated and taken prisoner. James, enraged at this violation of the truce, despatched a remonstrance to the English Court, but the affair was suffered to pass without farther notice; and there is every reason to conclude, that Ogle acted according to some secret instructions he had received from the English Council. \*

\* This affair is differently narrated by our historians, and the inroad has been greatly magnified. See Duff's History of Scotland, folio, p. 59; Maitland's History, folio, vol. i. p. 611; Drummond's (of Hawthornden) History of the Reign of James I. 8vo. edit. 1681, p. 39, 40; Abercromby's Martial Achievements, vol. ii. p. 299; Buchanan, lib. x. It is this difference of narration, and proneness to magnify slight skirmishes, as if they were great battles, which constitute some of the difficulties in Scottish History. According to the above writers, the English army entered Scotland, 4000 strong, under the command of Percy, Earl of Northumberland; and there is mention only made of a Sir John Ogle in that army. The Scots, under Angus, Hepburn, Elphinstone, and Ramsay, met them on the borders, at a place called Piperden, and, after a *desperate battle*, obtained a decisive victory, slaying 1500 of their enemies, and taking prisoners 400 noblemen and knights, and 300 men. They themselves, it is pretended, lost 500 men. It is not my intention to dis-



The cause of this infringement of the truce was the conduct of James with respect to France, with which country the English were at war. The Maid of Orleans was then pursuing her successful career, and the English armies had been more than once defeated by a woman. James had contracted his daughter, the Princess Margaret, to the Dauphin—an alliance which alarmed the English Government. But no direct violation of the truce between England and Scotland had taken place till 1435, which was destined to be followed by another wanton provocation in 1436. The Dauphin had then attained his thirteenth year, and the Scottish Princess her twelfth; and it was accordingly resolved to conclude the marriage. Henry of England beheld this connection with increased irritation, more especially as James had rejected an alliance he had himself proposed in a special em-

cuss the absurdity of this ludicrous attempt to magnify an inroad, which was made merely to harass James in his preparations to send his daughter to France, with which country the English were then at war. Bowar, vol. ii. p. 500, has set the matter right; and even Abercromby observes, that some writers say, the number of the prisoners amounted only to 1500, and that of the slain on both sides to 40 or 200 at most. The fact that Sir Robert Ogle commanded, and the date of this inroad, are ascertained from the correspondence of James and Henry on the subject, narrated in the long instructions of the English Council for redress. Cotton MSS. Vespasian, F. VII. f. 48, dated 5th February 1436. See also note, *apud* Pinkerton, vol. i. p. 130. Our historians, moreover, err in placing this skirmish after the departure of the Princess Margaret for France, which took place in 1436, whereas the inroad happened in 1435. The English were not in a condition to spare a numerous army for a Scottish expedition, nor was it their interest at that time to break with the Scottish King.

bassy conducted by Lord Scroop. In the beginning of the year 1436, two French envoys arrived in Scotland to betroth the Princess ; and she was sent to France, escorted by an honourable retinue, conducted by the Earl of Orkney and the Bishop of Brechin. Sixteen knights and squires, forty ladies of noble parentage, and 140 gentlemen, \* completed the gallant train, guarded by 1000 armed men, in three galleys, and six well-manned barges. The English Government, however, were on the watch ; 180 vessels lay in the Channel to intercept the Scottish Princess ; and captured she would have been, had not the English fleet attacked a number of Flemish merchant ships, and afterwards engaged with some Spanish vessels, which suddenly appeared, and deprived them of their Flemish prizes. The Scottish fleet escaped during these contests, and safely landed the Princess at Rochelle, whence she proceeded to Paris.

When James heard this additional insult offered him by the English, he did not long hesitate about retaliation ; yet it must be confessed, that, if the English were the first actual aggressors, the conduct of James was not altogether free from blame, inasmuch as he had actually sent troops to France, to assist the French armies against their English enemies. The delay of redress, however, for the inroad under Ogle, the attempt to intercept his daughter, and probably a desire to prevent any treasonable confederacies among his nobility, prompted James to undertake a war against England. With incredible alacrity, he summoned a

\* Drummond of Hawthornden says, 140 *gentlewomen*, History of James I. p. 38.



numerous army ; and it is remarkable, that Scotland, at all times limited in her resources, should have been able in those times to have sent so many men into the field,—a circumstance which can only, perhaps, be accounted for from the state of the kingdom, the limited extent of its merchandise and intercourse with foreign nations, and the nature of the tenures under which the peasantry held their limited property. The military array of James on this occasion consisted of nearly 200,000 men, many of them mounted on horses, and a vast number of foot soldiers and followers of the army. This unwieldy assemblage, however, chiefly formidable on account of its numerical strength, was ill-armed and without discipline, composed generally of men who were courageous and savage enough in their own peculiar mode of warfare, but totally unfit to endure a campaign against a less numerous but well-disciplined force.

The castle of Roxburgh, so fatal to James' son and successor, had been for a considerable time in the possession of the English,—a cause of no inconsiderable uneasiness to the Scottish monarchs. Situated on an eminence near the confluence of the Tweed and the Teviot, it had been always deemed a place of great importance ; and the vicissitudes it had undergone in former reigns made it at length be deemed, in a manner, the commanding fortress on the Borders. The recovery of this fortress, then held for the English monarch by Sir Ralph Gray, was the primary object of James, and against it he led his unwieldy army in person. The King sat down before it and began the assault without success. For fifteen days, the valiant governor of the castle kept the

Scottish force at bay ; and the King was at length compelled to abandon the siege, dismiss his army, and return unsuccessful.

The causes of this sudden movement and retreat of James are variously related by historians. With a vanity which is too often apparent among our early writers, they have generally asserted, that the castle of Roxburgh was almost recovered by James, notwithstanding the bravery of Gray the governor, when the Queen arrived suddenly at the camp, with tidings of a formidable conspiracy formed against him. Insinuations are even made against the Queen, that it was a mere pretence on her part, as she was disposed to favour her countrymen the English. The King, according to these writers, suddenly raised the siege, fearing the reality of the plot, and that the officers of his army had been corrupted by English gold ; and betook himself to Perth, that he might investigate the conspiracy. But these accounts seem to have originated solely in the melancholy events which marked the termination of James's life the following year. That there was a conspiracy existing against him, we shall presently see ; and it is probable that the Queen may have heard who were the principal leaders. But the narrative of Walter Bowar, the monastic historian, who lived at the period, at once explains the causes of James' sudden retreat. Had there been a conspiracy, such as is vaguely reported by later writers on no authority, James was much safer with his army than after its dispersion ; but the King appears to have been convinced, that he was weakening his kingdom by supporting this numerous army ; and perhaps he perceived that spirit of dissatisfaction and discontentment begin-

ning to operate among his nobles, which under his successors proceeded to violent extremes, and too often induced them to sacrifice their country to a gratification of their resentments.

After the army was disbanded, James retired to Perth, where the court was then held. The Dominican or Blackfriars' Monastery, founded in 1231 by Alexander II., was the royal residence,—a monastery of great splendour, sacrilegiously plundered and destroyed by the enthusiasts of the Reformation. This monastery, no trace of which now remains, was situated in the street still called the Blackfriars' Wynd; and from the manner in which it is mentioned, and the frequent allusions made to it by our historians, it appears to have been a magnificent fabric of Gothic splendour. It became the residence of the sovereigns when the court was kept at Perth, after the demolition of the Castle, (the site of which was towards the north end of the narrow street called the Skinnergate), in the Church of the monastery several parliaments were held; and it was always the place where the national ecclesiastical councils assembled. But it is necessary to introduce the principal actors in the cruel scene which terminated the life of James I.

## CHAPTER II.

There is a history in all men's lives,  
Figuring the nature of the times deceas'd;  
The which observ'd, a man may prophecy,  
With a near aim, of the main chance of things  
As yet not come to life, which in their seeds,  
And weak beginnings, be intreasured.

SHAKSPEARE—*Henry IV.*

SIR ROBERT GRAHAM, uncle of Malise Earl of Strathern, had been imprisoned by James in 1425, when he took his summary vengeance on the family of Albany; but the cause, unless he had been connected with the practices of Albany, is not accurately known. In the Parliament, held in 1424, a statute was enacted to ascertain the lands which belonged to the crown at the decease of Robert I., and James was authorized to call for the production of all charters and writs of tenure. While thus engaged, James turned his attention to the earldom of Strathern; and, under the pretence that it was a male fee, two years afterwards he divested Malise of the earldom, and gave it to his own uncle, Walter Earl of Athol and Caithness, grand-uncle to the same Malise, for his liferent. As a recompense to the latter nobleman, James assigned to him the earldom of

Menteith, by which distinction his family was afterwards known in the peerage.

Sir Robert Graham, whose hatred to the King was inveterate, beheld not this divestment of his nephew's dignity without indignation ; yet it can hardly be conceived that this alone could stimulate him to murder his sovereign. Whatever were his motives, his dissimulation induced him to intrigue with Athol, who was not without ambition, though it is not likely that Graham was at all inclined to aid it, from the circumstances above narrated. Athol, at this period approaching his seventieth year, was the second son of Robert II., by Euphemia Ross, the second queen of that monarch. His grandson, Sir Robert Stuart, was in high favour with James, and held the office of private chamberlain in the court. These were the two noblemen on whom Graham practised, captivating the dotage of age, and the inexperience of youth, to promote his own desperate revenge. His audacity equalled his dissimulation. It was pretended by him and his associates, that after the King was despatched, the crown would be given to Sir Robert Stuart ;—the latter thus dazzled by the prospect of a throne, and Athol his grandfather no less attracted by the hopes and allurements of seeing his family elevated to the regal dignity.

Graham soon found a number of desperate adherents in this conspiracy ; and after his plan was matured, every action of the King was interpreted in the severest manner. He made it his business to inflame the people by false representations of the King's proceedings, while he fomented the discontentment of the nobility, who were already suf-

ficiently dissatisfied at the King's successful attempts to diminish their power and influence. In 1434, shortly after Graham had been released from his imprisonment, a meeting of the principal nobility was held, most probably to consider the intentions of James, who was then proceeding vigorously in his plans to humble their feudal greatness. At this meeting Graham attended; and, irritated by his confinement, his conduct was as outrageous as his language was inflammatory. It was maintained, that the execution of Albany and his sons had originated in the insatiable avarice of the King to possess their estates; and no measured language was employed to express the greedy covetousness, by which, it was alleged, James oppressed and impoverished the kingdom. "My Lords," said Graham, at the conclusion of a long harangue, "if you will firmly support me in what I shall say to the King, I shall demand redress in your presence, and I trust in God we shall be satisfied." As he was a man of eloquence, and skilled in the laws as they then stood, Graham's proposal was readily assented to, and the nobles present bound themselves to support him.

The next Parliament was the time fixed for the accomplishment of this plan, and Graham in the meanwhile had not been idle. It met in 1435, and Graham, relying on the promises he had received of support, conducted himself with the most extravagant audacity. Exceeding the bounds of his commission, he rose with a furious countenance, and, advancing to the throne, he presumptuously laid his hand on the King, and exclaimed, "I arrest you in the name of the three estates of your realm, now assembled in this present

Parliament; for, as your subjects are bound and sworn to obey you in the administration of the laws, in like manner you are compelled to defend your people, to govern by the laws, so that ye do not wrong them, but defend and maintain them in justice." Then turning to the assembled peers, he cried, "Is it not thus as I say?" But they, astonished at his boldness, and awed, perhaps, by the presence of their sovereign, kept profound silence, not venturing to appear as the abettors of this daring action. The King immediately ordered Graham to prison, who, exasperated at seeing himself deserted by those who had pledged their support, retorted a severe sarcasm as he was led out in custody:—"He that serveth a common man, serveth only during his convenience."

It does not appear that James endeavoured to ascertain who were the associates of Graham preparatory to this exploit, but it farther confirmed him in his resolution to crush the power of the nobility. Graham was soon after ordered into banishment, and he retired to the fastnesses of the Highlands, revolving in his mind dark and desperate designs. As his estates were forfeited to the crown, he proceeded to renounce his allegiance, and sent the King a mortal defiance, declaring that for his tyranny he would destroy him, his wife, and children, and slay him with his own hands, whenever he had opportunity. This defiance drew forth a proclamation from James, offering a reward of three thousand deniers of gold, each piece worth half a noble of English money, to any one who would bring Graham, dead or alive, into the royal presence.



But, nothing daunted by this proclamation, this audacious rebel was not idle. He took advantage of the King's absence at Roxburgh Castle, to correspond with some of the nobles; and he voluntarily offered to assassinate James, and place the crown on the head of Robert Stuart, Athol's grandson. It was probably, after all, a report of Graham's conduct, which induced the Queen to depart with such precipitancy for the camp at Roxburgh; but there is no evidence to suppose that it caused James to raise the siege, as he was previously well aware of the inveterate hatred of this daring offender.

Athol and his grandson, however, had ere this time engaged in the conspiracy; and it is said the former was the more inclined, from the prediction of a Highland seer whom he had consulted in the district of Athol, that, "before his death, he would be crowned before a great concourse of people." The last parliament of James met at Edinburgh on the festival of All-Hallowmas, 1436, when the bold and ferocious Graham, though an exile and a rebel, exerted himself with more than ordinary activity. He sent private messages to certain retainers of the late Duke of Albany, again offering to slay the King, and place Sir Robert Stuart on the throne. By this means a few were drawn over to the party, but the chief conspirators were Graham himself, Athol, Sir Robert Stuart, and a domestic of the King's, whom they had bribed for the purpose, and from whom they received intimations of James' movements.

After the meeting of Parliament, in which many wise and salutary laws were enacted, the court removed to Perth, there to celebrate the approach-



ing festival of Christmas. If we are to believe the popular historians and chroniclers of the times, many supernatural indications were given of James' approaching fate. In 1436, towards the end of that year, Sir James Balfour notes, that a fearful comet, like a fiery sword, was seen in the heavens, as if between Edinburgh and Perth; \* and the same author gravely observes, that this year in Perth a sow brought forth a dog. A fearful eclipse also, it is said, lasted for three hours, during which it was as dark as midnight; and these hours were long remembered in Scotland as the *black hours*. As a remarkable prodigy, we are informed, that the frost was so intense that winter, as to cause ale and wine to be sold by weight, being frozen into a solid substance. Two of the most ridiculous traditions, doubtless an improvement on some of the former, are, that a calf was seen with a head exactly shaped like that of a horse, and a sow littered pigs with dogs' heads. Absurd as these traditions are, they were most religiously believed by the Scots of that age after the King's death, as so many indications from heaven of his approaching fate.

Meanwhile the conspirators were proceeding with caution; their plan was completely matured, the opportunity only being wanting to perpetrate the diabolical deed. Yet their caution was not so great as to prevent some vague rumours of their intentions to spread abroad; and these rumours had reached even the most intimate domestics in

\* It is remarkable that in the early history of Scotland the appearance of fiery swords in the air seems to have been very common.

the palace. But, from what cause soever it was, they seem to have been utterly disregarded ; nor were the least suspicions excited. The apparent inability of Graham to conduct any formidable conspiracy,—the fact that no powerful cabal of the nobles had been mentioned, and Graham's presumptuous defiance to his sovereign, resembling rather the ravings of a madman, than the cool and calculating intentions of a conspirator,—probably concurred in deceiving the King, and lulling every suspicion. Well, however, would it have been for James had he listened to the dictates of prudence, and endeavoured to apprehend this dark and gloomy exile, ere he was able to form any confederacy with ambitious nobles in a turbulent and seditious age.

## CHAPTER III.

'Tis said, as thro' the aisles they pass'd,  
They heard strange voices on the blast;  
And thro' the cloister-galleries small,  
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,  
Loud sobs, and louder laughter, ran,  
And voices unlike the voice of man :  
As if the fiends kept holiday,  
Because their spoils were brought to day.  
I cannot tell how the truth may be ;  
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

*Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

THE court removed to Perth in splendid array, anticipating the usual rejoicings at the celebration of the approaching festival. It was in the midst of the journey, that a Highland woman, who pretended to be a soothsayer, but who in reality had heard the real plans of the conspirators, appeared before the King and his attendants. Her wild and singular attitude astonished James. It was at a place, according to our authority, termed the Water of Leith—the rivulet known by that name which falls into the Frith of Forth near Edinburgh, as the King is described as being near, or in his way to, “ Saint John’s towne, which is from Edenborough on that other side of the Scottish See,” \*

\* The Frith of Forth was anciently called the *Scottish See*.

the river Tay. "My Lord King," she cried with a loud voice, "if you pass over this water, you shall never return again alive." James was startled at her language, more especially as at that moment an old prophecy occurred to his mind, that a King of Scotland was to be slain that year. He commanded one of his attendants to ride up to the woman, and ask the meaning of her dubious exclamation; but to this messenger she merely repeated what she had before said to the King, persisting in her declaration, that if he passed that stream, he would never return alive. He asked her how she knew that; to which she replied, that she had received her information from a person named Hubert, most probably a domestic of the palace. Whether or not the attendant was in the plot, is doubtful; he treated the prediction of the woman with contempt. "Sire," said he to James, "men would smile if your Majesty regarded yon woman's language, for she is nought but a drunken fool, and knows not what she says." The monarch and his attendants passed on, and entered Perth, where the celebration of the festival of Christmas commenced.

Many were the omens which were observed of the King's approaching fate, and many are the popular traditions recorded; but the observation of Pinkerton is too true, that "the worst omen was his rigorous administration, which had created many enemies, among whom the conspiracy spread like a fire among combustible materials." The monastery of the Dominicans, or Blackfriars, in Perth, as had been observed, was the King's residence, and the scene of his last and fatal revelry.

That magnificent edifice, thus destined to be the

scene of a most horrible tragedy, was on this occasion honoured by a brilliant assemblage of Scottish beauty, and bright eyes were there mixing in the dance and gracing the tournament, which ere long were to be suffused with tears. The Queen and her ladies resided in the monastery, and James, unconscious of his fate, moved among them—the gay, the gallant, the accomplished monarch. The sacred services of the Church were concluded, and the Court was the scene of festal gaiety. One of the attendant knights, remarkable for his personal accomplishments, received the epithet of *King of Love* from James. With him the King was one evening playing at chess, when he indulged in some sportive satire on his new title. “Sir King of Love,” said James, “it is not long since I read a prophecy, spoken some time ago, which set forth, that this year a king should be slain in this land, and well ye wot, Sir Alexander, there are no Kings in this realm but you and I; and therefore I counsell you that ye be wary; for I let you know that, under God, I shall take care of my own safety sufficiently, being under your Kingship, and in the service of Love.”

If our chroniclers are to be credited, other popular stories strikingly illustrate the influence of superstitious impressions, as also the fatal security in which James imagined himself. Shortly after the above circumstance, the King was in his own apartment, conversing with some ladies and nobles on various subjects. A squire, a favourite of the King, drew near, and said, “In sooth, my Lord, I verily dreamed to-night that Sir Robert Graham had slain your Majesty.” It is not improbable, that this, under the pretence of

its being a dream, was a timely hint to James of his situation ; but be this as it may, the squire was sharply reproved by the Earl of Orkney, (the same nobleman who founded the magnificent chapel at Roslin near Edinburgh), who commanded him to hold his peace, and tell no such idle tales in the royal presence. Yet it made some impression on James, who immediately recollected a dream of his own, in which he thought a serpent and a toad furiously assailed him in his own private apartments, and that he had nothing to defend himself against them but a pair of tongs he found in the chimney. The other signs and omens our chronicler has not narrated ; but yet, so great was the reverence which the presence of the devoted monarch excited, that thrice did Christopher Chambers, the domestic whom the conspirators had bribed, and who had formerly been a retainer of the Duke of Albany, attempt to approach the King, and make a full disclosure of the conspiracy, and as often did he fail, from a want of resolution, accident, or a sense of pity towards his associates. The unhappy monarch was devoted to destruction.

At length a night was fixed for the accomplishment of the conspiracy, and the first Wednesday in Lent 1437, was the night destined for its execution by the conspirators, being the night between the 20th and 21st of February. The leaders of the conspiracy had previously met ; Graham had privately returned from his gloomy fastnesses in the Highlands, and had arrived in the neighbourhood of Perth, where he met with Athol and his effeminate grandson. A speech is reported to have been delivered by Athol, in which he recapitulates all

his previous exploits in exciting ferments in the state, which, though conjectural, as it is not generally known, is not unworthy of a place in this narrative, more especially as it proceeds on various historical facts, in which, whether or not Athol was actually guilty to the full extent in this conspiracy, he had no inconsiderable share.

“The engagements,” said he to his associates, “which you have made to each other, and which I have made to you all, founded on the strongest grounds of consanguinity, friendship, and resolution to revenge our mutual wrongs, move me freely to reveal my secret intentions, and to disclose my hidden purposes and counsels. The tragedies which have been acted in the state since the first arrival of this Englishman at the crown, are to none of you unknown. Murdac and his children have been beheaded; the Earl of Lennox, the father-in-law of Murdac, came to the same end; the nobles repine at the government of the King; the King is jealous of his nobles; and the people are on the eve of rebellion. These have all been the effects of my crafty policy, and hitherto they have happened as fortunately as they were ingeniously contrived. For what more ingenious and cunning stratagem could be devised to overthrow the prosperity of these usurpers, than to get them despatched under the pretence of justice? Sitting myself as judge in Albany’s case, easily did I procure summary vengeance for the crimes of his house. And if there were any evil in such proceedings, in small matters we must not be over-scrupulous, that so justice and equity may be performed in great. My fear was, and indeed is, that



the taking down the scaffold of Albany might occasion the erection of ours ; crowns must not have rivals ; the world knows, and this Englishman himself is conscious, that the right and title to the crown, by descent of blood from Robert II., my father, was in the person of David, my brother, and is now justly claimed by me and my nephew. And though acts of Parliament and oaths of allegiance have seemingly confirmed the rights of that other race who now occupy the throne, yet no parliamentary authority can take away justice and the law of God ; neither are oaths binding, when they tend to the oppression of truth and right. And though for a time such acts and oaths have prevailed, yet, if our designs be successful, we shall have a Parliament approving our right, abolishing the authority of our oppressors, and declaring them usurpers. This one man and child taken off, if peradventure we can strike such a blow, the kingdom must obey the lawful successor. What subject will then dare to revolt, or take up arms against him ? Here is more fear than danger ; but though there were, the only remedies of present dangers are desperate courses. It was truly simple in him who now oppresses us, and usurps our throne, to think that deeply-rooted injuries are likely to be forgotten by the bestowal of contemptible favours, and that I should calmly submit to the title of Earl, when I should have been King myself, and receiving his homage. By his tyrannical justice, if he is not hated, he is not beloved, but has become an object of terror to his people, who now, through their poverty and grievances, obey him, not from affection, but from fear and necessity ; and he himself even feareth that some do that to



him which he knows right well he deserveth. Let us, then, resolve his doubts ; our purposes are honour and revenge ; our feelings towards him are mutual. The very heavens seem to favour us, having induced him to dismiss his army, and to come to the very place where our designs must succeed. Let us rather follow these advantageous circumstances, trusting more to that propitious fortune which ever favours great actions, than to that effeminate virtue which preacheth cowardly patience ; remembering, that the fairest representations of valour have been given to the foulest deeds, and that the most powerful families thence derive their greatness, chance seldom or never following victory, however it be achieved or purchased. What was sovereignty at first but a violent usurpation of the stronger over the weaker ? Great enterprises must begin with danger, but end with rewards. Death should rather be prevented than expected, but it were more honourable to die at once, than to prolong a miserable life, subject to the scorn of other men's pride. Let us be resolute in our plot, and hazard the enterprise. The worst that can befall us, since we cannot exist while the usurper is alive, is, that he be taken away while we run the hazard of death, which, however, happeneth to all men equally, with the difference only of fame or oblivion with posterity, which ariseth out of an evil action as well as out of a good, if the action and attempt be alike great. Now, then, is the time for action, not for superfluous deliberation."

This speech, though it is merely hypothetical, contains a pretty accurate specimen of the designs of the conspirators. The eventful night, however, at length arrived, which was to consummate the

tragedy. Graham was lurking in the neighbourhood of the Dominican Convent, occasionally receiving information of the proceedings within from the perfidious domestic. Athol and his grandson were at the court that evening, and the time was spent in more than ordinary hilarity, in playing at chess, reading, singing, piping, playing on instruments, and other amusements, both before and after supper. During the prolongation of these recreations, the woman who had before warned James of his fate, while on his journey from Edinburgh to Perth, appeared at the gate of the Dominican Convent. She had followed the court to Perth, and knew that this was the night fixed for the execution of the conspiracy, from the numbers of armed men lurking in the vicinity of the town. She entered the court of the Convent, and crossed to that side of the building which contained the royal apartments. Having found the door, she designed to force her way into the King's presence, but it was shut. She knocked till the door was opened by a domestic, who demanded her business at that advanced hour in the evening. "Let me in," said she, "for I have something to say, and to tell to the King. I am the same woman that not long ago desired to have spoken with him when about to enter Perth." The apparent earnestness of the woman astonished the domestic, and he proceeded to inform the King. Thinking, however, that it was some frivolous affair, James was not inclined to relinquish his amusements, and simply said, "Let her come tomorrow." When this was told to the woman, she sorrowfully replied, "Well, it will repent you all, that you will not let me speak now with the

King." This called forth a jest from the domestic, and she departed.

The amusements of the Court were kept up to a late hour. After supper, James called for the parting-cup, and every one present drank before retiring to rest. Stuart, Athol's grandson, was the last who left the King, and he left the door of the apartment open—a precaution indeed needless, as he had previously destroyed the locks. It would appear that a door from the apartments opened into a garden; for about midnight the conspirators had laid down planks of wood, and hurdles, by which they might be able to get over the ditch which surrounded the garden near the outer wall. By this way the conspirators entered the convent; and shortly after midnight, when the Court had retired to rest, Graham, with three hundred Highlanders, was in possession of the house, having effected his entrance without being observed, or meeting with the slightest interruption.

James had retired to his own apartment, and was standing before the fire-place in a kind of undress, gaily conversing with his Queen and her ladies, when suddenly he heard a loud noise in the court, as if the clashing of armour and armed men, and the gloomy flash of torches glared from without through the room. Immediately the suspicions of treason occurred to him; the warnings he had received revived in his mind; and his thoughts naturally reverted to the dark and gloomy exile who had insulted him by his mortal defiance. Astonishment and terror were depicted on the countenances of the ladies; and, as the noise waxed louder, they clung to each other around the

King. Recovering, however, their composure for a moment, the Queen and the ladies rushed to the door, which they found open, and the bolts destroyed. The unhappy prince, without arms or attendants, besought them to keep fast the door as well as they could, while he looked round to see if escape were practicable. He ran to the windows, but found them so strongly barred without, as utterly to preclude any possibility of escape by them; nor had he time to effect it, even had it been practicable, as the tumult and clashing of armour every moment increased. Heavy footsteps were already heard along the gallery which led to the King's apartment, and the violence from without already indicated the designs of the assailants.

The unhappy King, finding it impossible to escape by the windows, seized the fire-tongs, and, by a desperate exertion, succeeded in wrenching a plank from the floor, which covered a kind of square vault or cellar of trifling dimensions. Through this aperture he dropped himself, and covered himself with the plank. He was now in one of those disagreeable places often found in old houses, a place, indeed, full of ordure and filth, but still he could not escape outwardly, for, by a sad fatality, he had caused the aperture, or small square window, which had been formerly used for cleansing the place, and through which he could have easily escaped, to be built up three days before, because the tennis-balls were apt to enter it when that game was played in the garden. Yet even in this place the King might, perhaps, have been safe, had his own impatience not betrayed him.

As soon as the conspirators had got possession of the Convent, it was, of course, their first object

to make towards the King's apartment ; and tradition affirms, that they were shown it by Sir Robert Stuart, Athol's grandson, the same individual for whom James had always entertained a special regard. A page, named Walter Straiton, who held the office of cup-bearer, and who was then in the act of carrying some wine for the King and Queen, first gave the alarm. He saw them consulting among themselves, and instantly exclaiming, *Traitors ! Traitors !* made haste to secure the door. The page, however, was stabbed to the heart by one of the conspirators, who simultaneously rushed towards the King's apartment with axes, swords, and other weapons. Yet his cries had warned the inmates of the royal apartments of the approach of the assassins. The King was at this time in the vault, or cellar, under the floor, and the ladies ran towards the outer door. The bolts, as has been said, had been previously despoiled ; but one of the Maids of Honour, Lady Catherine Douglas, a lady of the house of Douglas, and afterwards married to a knight named Alexander Lovel, performed an action of heroism, which is worthy of being known to latest posterity. This noble lady, with a courage beyond her age and sex, thrust her arm into the bolt, while the door was attempted to be secured within by the pressure of the other ladies. The delicate arm-bone, however, was in a moment broken to pieces by the violence of the assassins, who burst open the door, and scrupled not, while thus stimulated by their savage passions, to trample down and wound several of the fair defenders. The fierce appearance of the conspirators alarmed the helpless females, and they fled from them with loud cries of terror and lamentation. Several attendants, whom

the noise had called together, and who endeavoured to resist, were slain, and among these fell Patrick Dunbar, a brother of the Earl of March. Shrieking with horror, the ladies fled, and the conspirators rushed into the apartment under which the King was concealed. They found the Queen speechless and aghast at the horrid scene, and incapable of even imploring protection. A villain wounded her, and would probably have murdered her on the spot, had not a son of Sir Robert Graham interposed, exclaiming, "What! shame on yourself! What will you do to the Queen? She is but a woman. Let us go and seek the King." Leaving the princess in that deplorable condition, with her hair dishevelled, and her dress, from their rudeness, hanging loose about her, while the ladies remained lost in tears and astonishment, the traitors proceeded to search every corner of the apartment.

But their search was in vain; and it is remarkable that they never recollected the cellar, or vault, below the floor. Having examined every corner without success, some of them proceeded to the one adjoining, while others extended the search to more remote apartments. Every place was diligently explored,—“in the litters, under the presses, the fourmes, the chares, and all other places, long they besily sought the Kyng.” At length a temporary quietness ensued, when the King, thinking the conspirators were gone, called for sheets to draw him out of the nauseous place of his concealment. The ladies with considerable exertion removed the plank, and were proceeding to extricate the King, when one of them, Elizabeth Douglas, fell down into the place. At this unfortunate moment, Christopher Chambers, one of the assas-



sins, recollecting the vault, or cellar, concluded, that as the King was not found in any of the apartments, he would most likely be there concealed. "Sirs," said he to his associates, "wherefore stand we thus idle, and lose our time, when the object of our search is hid? Come on with me, and I shall soon discover where the King is." He entered the apartment with a torch, and though the noise of their approach had caused the ladies hastily to replace the board, he proceeded to a careful examination of the floor. He soon perceived that a plank had been broken up, and lifting it, held the torch in the aperture, and beheld through the glare the King and the lady. "Sirs," he exclaimed with ferocious exultation, "the bride is found, for whom we have been searching, and carolling all night long." This fatal discovery, which, without doubt, the King's own impatience caused, was no sooner known than the conspirators speedily assembled. A traitor, named Sir John Hall, instantly leaped into the cellar with a dagger in his hand. But the King grappled him by the shoulders, and dashed him with violence on the ground. Another conspirator, a brother of Hall, descended, and made for the King, but the blow was parried; and, being seized by the neck, he also was thrown down. So strong was the grasp of the King when he throttled these two assassins, that they retained the marks on their throats for a considerable time after. Yet in vain did James attempt to wrest a dagger from either. Although standing above them, and they almost stunned by the fall, they held fast their weapons; and, in the struggle, the King wounded his hands, which served to render him the less capable of farther

defence. Had James succeeded in acquiring a dagger, he would not only have sold his life at the dearest rate, but in all probability, by parrying their attacks, he would have defended himself till the alarm had been sounded, and the people of the town assembled for his rescue in the monastery.

But fate had ordered it otherwise. Graham, the King's implacable enemy, now entered the apartment, and descended into the wretched cellar. Weary and faint with his former struggles, and also weaponless, James appealed to him for mercy, as further resistance was vain. But Graham, with ferocious exultation, raised his dagger, and pointed it towards the King's heart. "Thou cruel tyrant," said he, "never didst thou show mercy to those of thy own blood, nor to any other gentleman, who came in thy way. No mercy shalt thou have now." "Then," replied the King, "I entreat thee, for the salvation of my soul, to let me have a confessor." "No," said Graham, "no other confessor shalt thou have but this dagger." Thus saying, he plunged his weapon into the King's body. The unhappy monarch instantly fell with a fearful cry, imploring for mercy, and offering half his kingdom for his life. The assassin, struck with remorse for a moment, relented, and was about to withdraw without farther violence, when the other conspirators from above exclaimed, "We shall abide by thee faithfully, if thou slay him; but if thou depart, we swear thou shalt die by our hands." Immediately Graham, and the other two who had been thrown down, fell upon the King, and accomplished the infamous murder with circumstances of the most aggravated cruelty. They repeatedly stabbed him, even after



he was dead, in various parts of the body: no fewer than sixteen mortal wounds were in his breast alone.

Thus fell James I., the most accomplished prince of his time, in the forty-fourth year of his age, and thirty-first year of his nominal, though only the thirteenth of his actual reign. After murdering their sovereign, the infamous assassins, as if still unsatisfied with blood, sought the Queen, with the intention of murdering her also; but she had escaped. The alarm, however, was now given in the town; and the citizens, with the King's servants, rushed into the monastery, when it was too late, to defend their sovereign. The red glare of torches, and loud threats of vengeance, burst upon the midnight regicides, who, struck with dismay, now consulted their safety by flight in every direction. They were instantly pursued by Sir David Dunbar, but without success. One of them he slew, and wounded another; but in this fighting pursuit, for by this time they were compelled to a defence, some of them turned on him with fury, and sorely wounded him. They effected their escape to the fastnesses of the Highlands, only regretting that they had not slain the Queen, whose revenge they justly feared. "Why," said they, among themselves, "did we not also despatch the Queen? Had we done so, we would have been freed from the trouble and vengeance now likely to overtake us. Our work is only half done. She will yet pursue us, and exact a terrible retribution." Well might they have anticipated the vengeance of Joanna, for no punishment was ever more summary and revolting than

that inflicted on these wretched and infamous regicides.

The body of the unfortunate James was buried in the Church of the Carthusian Monastery, or Charter-house, at Perth—a monastery which he himself and his Queen had founded in 1429. No vestige of that splendid monastery is now to be seen; and the tomb of James, as well as those of his Queen Joanna, and Margaret, mother of James V., likewise buried in the same church, was lost in the fanatical dilapidations of the religious edifices, excited by the Scottish reforming enthusiasts in the sixteenth century. \* Drummond of Hawthornden relates, that the doublet in which the King was slain, was kept as a relic *almost to his time* (by which he must mean the century of the Reformation), and “with execrations seen by the people, every man thinking himself interested in his wrong.”

\* It is proper to mention, however, that a flat tombstone, with two figures in outline, supposed to represent James I. and his queen, was discovered some years ago, and is now to be seen built into the wall in one of the divisions of St John's Church at Perth.—Chambers' Picture of Scotland, vol. ii.

## CHAPTER IV.

“ Methinks I am a prophet new inspir’d,  
And, thus expiring, do foretell of him,  
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,  
For violent fires soon burn out themselves.  
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short ;  
He tires betimes that spurs too fast betimes,  
With eager feeding, food doth choke the feeder. ”

RICHARD II.

It is not accurately known by what means the leaders of this atrocious conspiracy were apprehended. The united testimony of all our historians, however, establishes the fact, that the King's murder excited great lamentation in the kingdom, and the most furious indignation against the conspirators ; for even those with whom James was unpopular, and who were disposed to view his government as tyrannical, deplored their sovereign, and deemed the act execrable. So anxious were the people to bring the conspirators to justice, that every baron and chief in the kingdom united in endeavouring to apprehend them. Had this not been the case, it is probable that they might have eluded justice for a considerable time in the fastnesses of the Highlands. They had good cause to fear the vengeance of the Queen. Within a month after the assassination, they were all taken

and lodged in prison, when punishments were prepared for them, and a series of exquisite tortures devised, which, as refinements on human cruelty, excite, even at this distance of time, the involuntary shudder, and sufficiently denote the barbarism of the age.

The regicides who were first apprehended, were Sir Robert Stuart and Christopher Chambers. They were secured, it is said, by Robertson of Strowan—a fact extremely probable, as they both retreated after the assassination to that chieftain's territories.\* They were carried to Edinburgh, and imprisoned in the Castle, whence they were speedily brought to trial, and condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. The metropolis was destined to be the scene of the sufferings of some of the conspirators. For those two who were first brought to punishment, a scaffold was erected in the principal street of the city, and a wooden cross of considerable height was placed in the centre. To this cross they were both bound, almost naked, amid a great concourse of spectators. The executioner stood before them with a pair of iron pinchers or tongs, with which he ever and anon twisted their bodies, and pulled off large pieces of their flesh in the most excruciating manner, while the blood gushed forth from the ghastly wounds. Yet they endured with great patience their torments; and Sir Robert Stuart even said to the executioner, "Do whatsoever you please, for we have been guilty, and well deserve much more than this painful death." This wretched

\* In commemoration of this event, the Family of Strowan have ever since borne a *wild man chained*, lying under the escutcheon of their arms.

young man, on whose inexperience the crafty Graham had wrought so effectually, deeply lamented the share he had in the conspiracy. They were soon after made to descend from the scaffold, and were led through the streets of Edinburgh, the same tortures being all the way repeated by the executioner. They were then brought before the Guildry Hall or Council-House, which was situated in the vicinity of St Giles' Church, and compelled to remount the scaffold, where they stood nearly two hours a public spectacle. After this they were again carried through the city, till they came to a place where two high poles had been erected, with cross-beams, for some mechanical purpose. Here they were stopt, and the executioner immediately tied ropes round about their breasts, below their shoulders, and suspended them in the air. While thus hanging, they made an open confession of their guilt; Sir Robert Stuart professing great penitence, but Christopher Chambers justifying the whole conspiracy, and the manner of the King's death. After being suspended for some time in this manner, they were both carried to the market-place, where Sir Robert Stuart was drawn asunder by four horses; his companion beheaded on a high scaffold, and then quartered.\* Stuart's head was sent to Perth,

\* This assertion is on the authority of Sir James Balfour (*Annals*, vol. i. p. 165.); and I have adopted it though it is traditionary. It is proper to mention, however, that the other authorities state simply that Stuart was beheaded and quartered. I find Drummond observing (*History of King James I.* p. 52), that "Robert Stuart was not altogether so rigorously handled, for that he did not consent to others' wickedness, being only hanged and quartered."

and placed on the top of the town-jail; the head and right hand of his associate were fixed on a spear, and set up in Edinburgh.

The next leader of the conspiracy brought to punishment was the Earl of Athol, who had been apprehended by the Earl of Angus, and lodged also in the Castle of Edinburgh. This aged nobleman was arraigned and condemned by his peers; though, in the presence of Antony de Santo Vito, Bishop of Urbino, and at that time Papal Legate in Scotland, he persisted in declaring his innocence. As the festival of Easter was at hand, the cross on which his grandson was tortured, was, from a religious feeling, taken down, as unbecoming the associations connected with that great and solemn festival of the Christian Church; but a pillar was set up, to which he was bound. For three successive days the punishment of this nobleman continued; and it is hardly credible to think that, at his great age, he was able to endure the tortures inflicted on him. If the narration of Buchanan be true, the Scots of that age showed themselves to be barbarians in no ordinary degree. At first he was placed naked in a cart, over which a stork-like swipe or engine like a crane was placed, and by ropes through pullies he was hoisted up in the air. The ropes being loosened, he was suddenly let down again with great violence, the motion of the excruciating torture causing a relaxation of the joints. \* In this manner was this aged nobleman dragged along the High Street and the Canongate of Edinburgh. On the second day he was

\* Sir James Balfour (*Annals*, vol. i. p. 165) does not attempt to describe this machine. He merely says, that it was "ane ingyne made for the purpois."

bound to the pillar, and a red-hot iron crown placed upon his head, with the inscription above, *The King of all Traitors !* \* that the prediction of the Highland soothsayer might be fulfilled, that he should be crowned King before a great concourse of people. He was then placed upon a hurdle, and drawn at the horse's tail through the principal streets. The third day closed his sufferings. He was led out to the scaffold, where a scene of no ordinary cruelty was to be exhibited. He was brought on the scaffold, and while he was yet alive, he was stretched naked along it, his bowels were cut out and cast into a fire, afterwards his heart was pulled out and also consumed. † He was then beheaded and quartered. His hoary head was placed upon a spear in a prominent part of the city encircled with a crown of iron, and his four quarters were set up on posts in Perth, Stirling, Glasgow, and Aberdeen.

Such is the traditionary narrative of the punishment of the aged Athol, who was at this time in his seventieth year ; and it certainly proves, in a remarkable degree, the barbarism of the Scots at that period. That Athol was concerned in the conspiracy is undeniable ; but as he was not a

\* Our contemporary writer denies the fact of the red-hot iron crown. He says, that Athol was led to the "poulour yn the toune, and ther wes he fast bounden, and a *corone of papir* put upon his hed, the which was all aboute depaynetid with jubettes, and for the more dispite and shame to hym, was writyn with thes wordes, *Traitour ! Traitour ! Traitour !* "

† Sir James Balfour says, the heart was "rost in a fyre befor his eyes by the executioner, then cast to the doges to eat."



personal actor in it, the tortures inflicted on him were revolting and infamous. It is proper to mention, also, that he continued to assert his innocence to the Bishop of Urbino, the Papal Legate, who was present at his trial, and to whom he confessed himself. He maintained to that prelate to the last, that he had never consented to the King's death; but he admitted that he knew of it, and kept the intentions of the conspirators secret, because Sir Robert Stuart was his own grandson, whom he did not wish to expose. He admitted, also, that Stuart had proposed the conspiracy to him, but that he counselled him against it, regarding the whole matter as a wild and visionary scheme of a young man. He appears, indeed, to have expected a pardon till he was led out to the scaffold.

But supposing Athol guilty of treason to the full extent, no one will deny that the revenge was infamous in the highest degree. His hoary hairs ought at least to have saved him from the torture of three successive days. His royal birth, and relationship to the King, also, though it made his crime the greater, inasmuch as James had been to him and his family no inconsiderable benefactor, ought to have saved him from being held up to the ignorant rabble in this shocking manner. It was disgraceful to the royal house of Scotland to see one of its princes cruelly arrayed in the mock ensigns of royalty, and it was no less disgraceful to the peers to see one of their number, whose guilt might bear a question, and whose age was certainly excusable, thus enduring wanton torture before the vulgar. Death was the utmost they could inflict, and humanity required its infliction



in the shortest manner. It was, however, the revenge of Joanna, and it was a fearful revenge for a woman.

The revolting narrative, however, is not concluded. Another, and the most important conspirator, was yet to be punished, namely, Sir Robert Graham; and in the case of this audacious criminal, there was certainly some excuse for the application of the torture. It appears from the confessions of Christopher Chambers, that many of the inferior sort, who were connected with the conspiracy, were drawn into it totally ignorant of Graham's intentions, he holding out to them, that his motive for attacking the Dominican Convent was merely to carry off a young lady of the court, with whom Stuart was enamoured, and whom he intended to marry the following day. They declared, that they knew not even the nature of the conspiracy, until they had at once become parties in the regicide. Whether this be true or not, is of little consequence; Graham was the contriver of the whole plot, and the first who plunged his dagger into his sovereign's breast. He was removed to Stirling, where he was brought to trial, the inhabitants of the metropolis being sufficiently disgusted at the recent executions. This ferocious assassin had the hardihood to glory in his crime, to tell his judges, that there was no law to put him to death, as he had committed no fault, but had slain his mortal enemy, which might be proved by his own letters, written to the King some years before, sealed with his own seal, in which he had sent his defiance to the King, and renounced his allegiance, for reasons, as he conceived, perfectly satisfactory. It was evident, therefore, that if he

(Graham) got justice done him, they would immediately set him at liberty, because the King would have destroyed him if he had been able to apprehend him. Perceiving, however, that this reasoning was treated with contempt by the judges, Graham looked steadily at them, with a bold and courageous countenance, and thus addressed them from the bar:—"Sinful, wretched, and tyrannical Scotsmen! without prudence, ignorant, and weak-minded, well do I know that I shall die, and that I cannot escape your murderous hands. By malice, and not by law, ye have determined to doom me to death, which condemnation God hath inflicted on me, not by reason of this pretended accusation, but for various offences and grievous sins, which, in the days of my youthful inexperience, I committed against him. Yet doubt it not, that you will yet see the day when you will pray for my soul, for the good I have done to you, as one of the greatest benefactors of this realm, for having slain and delivered you from the government of a cruel tyrant, the greatest enemy whom the Scots or Scotland ever had, noted even in his youth for his unsatiable avarice, his unsupportable tyranny, without pity or compassion to relations or friends, high or low, rich or poor."

This speech, which was long remembered in Scotland, though delivered with considerable energy and eloquence, made no impression on Graham's judges. He was immediately condemned, and the sentence was speedily carried into execution in the town of Stirling, in a manner, if possible, still more revolting and barbarous than the punishment of his associates.

The criminal was placed in a cart, in the centre

of which a pole of seven or eight feet in height was placed, and to this pole he was in a manner suspended by the right hand, which was transfixed to the top of the pole, the dagger driven through it with which he slew the King. In this manner he was drawn through the town. After enduring this torture, the executioner, with the same knife or dagger, separated the hand from the body, and burnt it before his face. He was then nailed to the pole, in a state of complete nudity, and a second time drawn through the town. In this progress, two executioners were placed opposite to him, who continually cut and gashed his body with hooked instruments of red-hot iron, pinching and twisting his thighs, legs, arms, sides, back, shoulders, neck, and belly;—"the whole musckells of his body," says Sir James Balfour, "being cut in long slits,"—his tormentors seeking out the most tender parts of the body on which to inflict their pinching gashes. This excruciating torture excited the pity of the beholders, who turned with disgust from the appalling sight. In the midst of these tortures, Graham conducted himself with a courage and resolution worthy of a better cause. "This that ye are doing to me," he exclaimed, with a deadly voice, "being against the law, is another proof of your unmeasurable tyranny. The world will henceforth mention the Scots as brutal barbarians, when the painful and tyrannical tortures are known which you have inflicted on me, and which it is hardly possible to endure. I doubt not, if ye continue your wanton tortures on my wretched body, that the very pain will constrain me to deny and blaspheme my Maker. But if I do, I declare before God, the

great and chief Judge of all mankind at the universal doom, that you have been the cause of the loss of my soul."

The sight, indeed, was too much for humanity to endure, and some nobles, who attended on the execution, made the unhappy Graham be instantly taken down. But it was a humanity more barbarous than the wanton cruelties he had previously suffered, inasmuch as they were reserving him for greater torments. Covered with blood, and disfigured by frightful and ghastly wounds, a rough mantle of the coarsest texture was thrown over his body, and he was afterwards cast into a nauseous and horrid dungeon in the town. While in this state of insensibility, some of the inferior sort were hanged, bowelled, and quartered, after which Graham was brought out to his final execution. When carried to the scaffold, he was set on his feet, and instantly the coarse mantle which had been thrown over him, and which, having stopped the blood, had stuck fast to his wounds, was torn from his body, and the blood again gushed from the ghastly writhings. So excruciating was the pain of this dreadful punishment, that the criminal fell down in a swoon, from which he did not recover for some time. When he revived, he said that the tearing of the mantle from his body was more painful than any of the other tortures he had endured. But another and still more painful punishment was in reserve, which made all his wounds bleed afresh. His son was in the conspiracy; and while Graham himself lay in these agonies, the unhappy youth was brought out, and bowelled and quartered before his eyes. His tormentors, thinking that they had punished the re-

gicide sufficiently, or tired of their barbarous cruelties, or unable to invent any other torture, now proceeded to the completion of the sentence. Graham was beheaded, and his bowels taken from his body; his heart cast into a fire, and his body quartered, and sent to the four principal towns in the kingdom. His head was set over the West Port gate of the city of Edinburgh.

Thus ended the punishment of the conspirators against James I., in which the most summary revenge was inflicted on those persons. If the conspiracy against the King, and the circumstances attending that prince's murder, were atrocious in no ordinary degree, and if the courage of Graham, in particular, was not inferior to "his dark fanaticism of vengeance, as appeared from the spirit with which he bore his punishment," it must be admitted that the assassins rendered a terrible retribution, and that the vengeance which was taken upon them was amply proportioned to the magnitude of the crime. The annals of few modern nations are stained with more wanton cruelties than are the annals of the Scots; and the punishment of those conspirators now recorded may be placed on the same line with the tortures practised by the most savage and barbarous nations. The ingenuity of torture which appears in the ample narrative now given, from an authority which is undoubted, and which is substantiated by the unanimous testimonies of our historians, was characteristic of a country which, according to Le Laboureur, a contemporary writer, was "more abundant in savages than cattle," and a people whose penury and barbarism the French, as l'rois-sart testifies, witnessed not without a shudder.

But while it is admitted that these tortures sufficiently indicate the rudeness of the age, and prove that the Scots of that century were barbarous in no ordinary degree, it must not be forgotten, that the necessary allowances must be made for this rudeness and barbarism, the foregoing remarkable exhibition of which was called forth to revenge a crime of the greatest atrocity, committed under circumstances of peculiar aggravation. If, as has been already said, the revenge was Joanna's, it was a revenge hardly credible to be sanctioned by a woman; and yet there is every reason to conclude that it was under her auspices, as the conspirators, before they were apprehended, expressed their dread of the Queen's vengeance, and as she at that time was vested with the executive government. The infliction of the torture, however, on regicides, or on those who have attempted the life of their sovereign, has been witnessed among nations more civilized than were the Scots in the fifteenth century, and in a more enlightened age. Ravilliac, who assassinated Henry IV. of France in 1608, was put to death in a manner as cruel, to say the least, as were the Scottish conspirators; and Damiens, who attempted the life of Louis XV. of the same country, suffered tortures, even in the middle of the 18th century, which would have disgraced an age of greater barbarism than that of James I. of Scotland. Both of these criminals, too, were under the influence of fanaticism; the insanity of the latter, in particular, was proved beyond a doubt; while the conspiracy against James was planned and executed in the coolest manner, from a principle of private revenge, and

from a wish to gratify the most lawless ambition. The rudeness of the age, therefore, which cannot be pleaded in the cases of Ravilliac and Damiens, may be held as an apology for the tortures which the Scottish regicides suffered; and though the best feelings of humanity, as regulated by philosophy, and enlightened by the precepts of a pure and rational religion, naturally prompt us to lessen, as much as possible, the sufferings of condemned criminals, it is right, to a certain extent, that a more marked expression of public abhorrence should be awarded to the regicide. For, if he be justly accounted infamous by his fellow men who is a traitor to his country, how much more infamous is he who dares to shed the blood of his sovereign, who is *Pater Patriae*, the father of his country?

With respect to Graham, notwithstanding the tortures he endured, he was long remembered by the Scots with abhorrence in a popular rhyme of the country:

“ Sir Robert Graham,  
Who slew our King,  
God give him shame. ”

---

Such is the account furnished by a contemporary writer of this melancholy history, of which it may be said, in the quaint versicle of an old poet—

“ My hand and pen have tried to write,  
A wofull tale to tell:  
My pen it cannot halfe indite  
Alace! how it befell.

This account differs very much from that gene-



rally given by our historians. The original MS., in the antiquated and perplexing phraseology of the period, is printed in the Appendix to the first volume of Pinkerton's History of Scotland; and that writer has followed it in his History. The original MS., translated by one John Shirley from the original Latin in 1440, was found by Mr Pinkerton in the possession of a Mr Jackson of Clement's Lane, Lombard Street, London. It had formerly belonged to Mr Thoresby of Leeds, the eminent antiquarian, and is noticed by Bishop Nicolson, in his Historical Libraries, chap. iii., as in his possession. It concludes in the following quaint manner. "And thus nowe here endethe this most pitevous cronicle, of th' oribill dethe of the Kyng of Scottes, translated oute of Latyne into oure moders Englishe tong, bi youre symple subyet John Shirley, in his laste age, after his symple understandyng, whiche he recommendethe to your supportacione and correccion, as that youre gentelnese vowchethe safe for his excuce, &c." John Shirley describes himself as "youre humble ser-vytoure John Shirley, att the full nobill, honorable and renouned cité of London, so as feblesse wold suffice, in his grete and last age, the yere of oure lord a thousand foure hundrethe forty."



II.

---

THE  
DEATH  
OF

JAMES III. OF SCOTLAND.

A. D. 1488.



THE  
DEATH  
OF  
JAMES III. OF SCOTLAND.

---

CHAPTER I.

As wha wad, in a stormy blast,  
When mariners been all aghast,  
Through danger of the sea's rage ;  
Then tak a chyld of tender age,  
And to his bidding, all obey.

SIR DAVID LINDSAY.

THE circumstances which led to the untimely fate of James III., mark in a peculiar manner the age in which he lived. The aristocracy, fierce and powerful, utterly disregarded the authority of their sovereign, and viewed the reigning prince as a mere machine, on whose shoulders the government ostensibly rested, but who depended on them alone for co-operation and support. James, on the

other hand, to adopt the quaint language of Drummond of Hawthornden, "conceived that noblemen, like the coin, were of his predecessors' making; and why he might not put his stamp upon the same metal, or, when those old metals were defaced, that he might not refound them, and give them a new print, he could not well conceive." On many points, therefore, the Scottish nobles differed from their sovereign, though none exasperated them more than a new creation of their order, and the exaltation of paltry minions to the honours and the privileges of nobility. Proud to a proverb of their ancestors, and tenacious of their dignity, the Scottish nobles of that age were not the men to submit with patience to those infringements on their rights as peers, and to proceedings which they deemed as insults to their families, whose antiquity they boasted could be traced to the very foundation of the monarchy. A series of intestine broils, caused for the most part by the imprudent conduct of James, ensued; which ended in their appearing in arms against their sovereign, on a spot sacred in the annals of Scottish story,—where their ancestors boldly encountered the English host,—where Bruce, the great restorer of the monarchy, obtained his most signal victory,—where the song of national enthusiasm was raised by many a gallant warrior, and appalled the effeminate Edward of England. On that very spot—the well known field of Bannockburn—the indignant and exasperated confederates opposed their lawful sovereign, and were successful with less bloodshed than when Bruce, after he had cleft to the chin with his battle-axe the boasting Henry de Bohun, rode triumphant over the tent-

ed field, won by his skill, and the valour of his warriors.

We have seen, in the case of James I., that the policy which that prince adopted in endeavouring to humble the exorbitant power of the aristocracy, was attended with disastrous consequences ; and the Dominican Monastery at Perth witnessed the indomitable spirit of disappointed ambition. His son and successor, James II., when he came of age, had to oppose the flood of aristocratic tyranny and violence which had been restrained by temporary barriers under the stern administration of his father ; and the House of Douglas, during his reign, was so powerful, as to contend with royal authority, and assert its independence with the utmost insolence and haughtiness. The fall of that House, however, which James himself accelerated, by stabbing Douglas with his own hand in Stirling Castle, freed him not only from a turbulent peer, whose retainers were numerous, and who lived in a sort of regal splendour, creating knights, and convening senatorial assemblies, but even from a dangerous rival ; yet the assassination of Douglas,—a breach of good faith and kingly pledge,—was regarded by his subjects with horror ; and it hindered not the successor of that same Douglas, with other nobles, to enter into a dangerous association against James, and exhibit manifestoes on the doors of the principal churches, declaring, “ that they were resolved never to obey, command, or charge, nor answer any citation for the time coming ; because the King, so far from being a just master, was a bloodsucker, a murderer, a transgressor of hospitality, and a surpriser of the innocent.” But the rigorous measures of James

frustrated the intentions of this association ; nor was it long before he effected the complete and irrecoverable fall of the House of Douglas. Misfortune, however, overtook him, as well as his father ; and his brilliant career soon set in the fatality which attended the princes of his house. Rash curiosity prompted him to examine too cautiously one of the rudely contrived cannons of that age at the siege of Roxburgh Castle ; and Scotland was again to bewail the untimely death of an accomplished monarch, for whose loss the demolition of that calamitous fortress was but a sorrowful consolation.

The progeny of James II. were, his son who succeeded him, Alexander Duke of Albany, John, afterwards Earl of Mar, and two daughters—all infants ; James III. being only in the eighth year of his age. A regency administered the government till the King attained his eighteenth year, during which, from the silence of our annals, little is known of the internal state of the kingdom. The disposition of James differed from that of his two predecessors, and rendered him incapable of governing a turbulent people in a rude and turbulent age. In person he was elegant, but weak in mind, without dignity or prudence. His habits were not those which were calculated to ensure respect and attachment ; his pursuits were characterized by the ignorance of the times, his proneness to superstition, love of retirement, and attachment to favourites, disgusted his nobles, and accelerated his downfall. Avarice was a prominent feature in his disposition, while he was capricious, averse to public business, abandoning the government to minions, who oppressed the people, and flattered

him in his indolence. His virtues were thus counterbalanced by failings which approximated to vices ; and though his reign is characterized by few acts of injustice on his own part, his inclination to despotism was not the less conspicuous ;—his impatience of moderate courses too often prompting him to hasty and imprudent outrages. A sovereign thus constituted was liable to the intrigues of opposing factions, who would not fail to improve the advantages his own remissness afforded, and evince their dissatisfaction by exploits of boldness and decision.

But from the years 1469 to 1476, James III. had been uniformly successful in his government, and fortune had been more liberal to him in her favours than to his more immediate predecessors. In his minority, the executive government appears to have been intrusted to his mother, Mary of Gueldres, assisted by the prudence, ability, and wisdom of James Kennedy, Bishop of St Andrew's, (for the See was not then archiepiscopal), a prelate as illustrious for his piety and learning, as he was for his royal birth and ancient lineage. To this princely prelate, a grandson of Robert III., Scotland is indebted for her first establishment of learning ; and the University of St Andrew's is a noble memorial of Bishop Kennedy's episcopal piety and munificence.\* The reduction and de-

\* It may be remarked, *en passant*, in allusion to the Scottish Universities, that Scotland is indebted solely to Bishops for the establishment of her Universities. Glasgow was founded by the pious Bishop Turnbull ; King's College, Aberdeen, by Elphinstone, Bishop of that See ; St Andrew's, by Bishop Kennedy ; St Mary's, in that University, by Archbishop James Beaton, and farther endowed by Cardinal David Beaton and Archbishop Hamil-

molition of the calamitous Castle of Roxburgh ; the surrender of Berwick to the Scots, an acquisition often in vain attempted from the days of Edward Baliol ; the cessation of the Orkneys to Scotland, by the marriage of James to Margaret of Denmark, daughter of Christian I., and the possession of the Shetland Islands, sold by the same monarch to James, to enable him to carry on his war with Sweden ; \* the treaty with

ton. Even the University of Edinburgh owes its original foundation to Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney. The Marischal College, Aberdeen, founded by the Earl Marischal, is the only Scottish University founded by a layman.

\* Before that period (1468 and 1469), the Orkney and the Shetland Islands belonged to Denmark, and they were sold, or rather pledged, to James III. by Christian, at the marriage of James and Margaret of Denmark, as part of the marriage-portion of that princess. The portion which James received with Margaret, was 60,000 florins, 10,000 of which were to be paid by the Danish King to the Scottish ambassadors, and the Orkney Islands were assigned to James as a pledge for the 50,000, until redeemed by him or any of his successors. But Christian's affairs rendered him unable to pay the remaining 10,000 florins, and his Swedish war served as an apology for his offering the Shetland Islands as part of that sum. He proposed them in pledge to James for 8000 florins, while he agreed to pay the remaining 2000, (a sum now nearly equal to about 20,000*l.* Sterling), and the proposal was accepted. As the pledge was never redeemed, the Islands, since the above period, have belonged to the British Crown. It may be mentioned, that Torfaeus, a Danish writer, who wrote in 1697, attempts to prove that these islands may still be redeemed by Denmark. They were claimed in 1549, 1558, and 1560, during the reign of Mary ; in 1585, during the reign of James VI., on occasion of his marriage with Anne of Denmark ; in 1610, during the reign of Charles I. ; in 1660 and 1667, after the Restoration.



England, in which a marriage was contracted between the infant son of James (afterwards James IV.) and Cecilia, daughter of Edward IV., and which, had it been observed, might perhaps have saved Scotland from the fatal disaster of Flodden in the next reign; the assumption and annexation of the earldom of Ross to the Crown, on account of the rebellion of John Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, by which the whole of Ross, including Knapdale and Kintyre on the Western Seas, with the Castles of Nairn and Inverness, were withdrawn from the dominion of those powerful and turbulent chieftains, who had held that earldom as Lords of the Isles since the commencement of the century, and who had been long the hereditary foes of the Scottish Crown:—these, with other events of a less public, but not of a less important nature, such as the foundation and endowment of the University of St Andrew's, and the erection of that city into an archiepiscopal see and primacy, by which the usurping claims of the metropolitans of York over the Scottish Church were finally ended, were splendid events in the annals of James' reign, as indicating a high state of national prosperity, and as tending to repress, for a time, the spirit of dissatisfaction which many of his measures would have otherwise infallibly excited. But this seeming prosperity was speedily to be checked; a change of political views soon roused the slumbering spirit of faction, and dissipated the bright anticipations of the future. The measures of James had provoked a deep and inveterate hatred among his nobles against him, and, having no standing army, the utmost facility was given to the formation of a powerful confederacy:

a catalogue of crimes, a series of misfortunes, and the usual result of imprudence,—a dangerous conspiracy, were to characterize the remaining years of the reign of James III., and to terminate in his ruin.

The disposition and the private habits of the King had been little in accordance with the splendid acquisitions above recorded, from the success of which we would naturally conclude that he was a prince of great abilities. In the year 1476, when his misfortunes commenced, he had reached his twenty-fifth year,—the age in which the civil law sanctions a complete majority; and, perhaps, much must be allowed for the previous inexperience of youth, and his capricious disposition, which would rather be encouraged by ambitious minions, than restrained and regulated by the salutary principles of moderation and prudence. Unable to discriminate, or to estimate rightly the dispositions of those by whom he was surrounded, and of his subjects at large, James found himself overwhelmed by misfortune ere he was aware, and a confederacy, which he could have checked at its first commencement, grown too powerful to be dismayed by the threatened vengeance of a monarch, who was without resources to oppose, and unable to prevent, the leaders of any association.

The habits of James were widely different from those of his brothers, the Duke of Albany and the Earl of Mar. From a peculiar weakness of mind, for which the age in which he lived is doubtless an excuse, James was a religious believer in every superstitious absurdity. He was greatly addicted to astrology, and was completely swayed by the prevailing notions of sorcery and witchcraft. These

studies, added to others more praiseworthy, namely, music and architecture, were his sole occupations ; and in solitary retirement, he forgot or neglected the duties of a monarch amid various idle amusements. As the nobles in those days seldom visited the court, except when on urgent business, they were totally ignorant of the favourite pursuits of their sovereign. It may be easily conceived, that the society of men who held these studies as utterly effeminate and contemptible, would be of no great importance to James, and that he would use every means to rid himself of their presence. The same fatality prompted him to forget his dignity, and to associate with low-born and despicable minions, who flattered him in his favourite pursuits, and who pretended to excel in the sciences to which he was addicted. Men of mean origin thus exalted above their degree, knowing well the evil eyes that were upon them, felt their only safety to consist in preserving the delusion of James. The conduct of the King, indeed, in this respect, would almost infer a kind of infatuation. William Shevez, Archdeacon of St Andrews, an unprincipled ecclesiastic, who by various arts and impostures succeeded in supplanting the pious Patrick Graham, first Archbishop of St Andrews, uterine brother to the munificent Kennedy, Bishop of that See, and founder of the University, was one of the King's chief favourites, on account of his pretensions to astrology. Cochrane, a master-mason, who had been introduced to James, on account of his skill in architecture ; and a man named William Rogers, an Englishman, by profession a musician, were other two favourites. But

their names were respectable when compared with the other chosen companions of the Scottish King. William Torphichen, a swordsman or fencing-master, James Hommil, a tailor, and one Leonard, a smith, were the daily associates of James III., on whom he heaped rewards and favours, who were his chief counsellors, and with whom he completely forgot the majesty of the sovereign.

It was not to be expected that the haughty nobles of Scotland in that age could behold the exaltation of these worthless minions, and the neglect of their own ancient order, without exasperation. Their hatred and contempt of the King necessarily increased when they placed him in contrast with his brothers, who excelled in all those martial accomplishments which command respect in a feudal age, and among fierce and warlike barons. It was only, according to Lindsay of Pitscottie, that the two princes, especially Albany, whose courage was well known, were on good terms with James, notwithstanding his superstitious predilections, that the Scottish nobles were restrained from appearing in open rebellion.

But a confederacy was secretly forming, and, in 1479, circumstances soon occurred which called it into action, and roused the King from his effeminate lethargy. It was destined, too, to commence with Albany and Mar. The former prince had been appointed Warden of the Eastern Marches for life, governor of Berwick, and lord-lieutenant of the Borders; he was also vested with the earldom of March. Very extensive powers had been conceded to Albany for the execution of his office, which he was often wont to display with no ordinary ostentation and dignity; and the consequence

was, that the Barons or Border Chiefs of the adjacent counties, who were chiefly freebooters, began to plot his destruction. The Homes and the Hepburns, in particular, two very numerous and powerful septs, had conceived a violent enmity towards him, on account of some peculiar offence they had received, or fancied they had received, from Albany, whose earldom of March lay contiguous to their possessions. He had, moreover, compelled them to restore to him certain lands, which they had by some means or other ingeniously acquired in the preceding reign. Afraid, however, that they were unable to oppose him successfully in an open attack, which they would not have scrupled to have done had a favourable opportunity offered, they began their practices in a different quarter.

Certain emissaries of those freebooters repaired to the Court, and obtained access to Cochrane, the King's chief favourite, who, they knew well, resented Albany's contempt, though he dreaded his power. A confederacy had indeed been previously formed against the royal favourites, with which Albany and his brother the Earl of Mar, had no inconsiderable connexion. It was not difficult, in these circumstances, to obtain Cochrane's co-operation in their endeavours to effect the ruin of Albany, as it was the interest of that minion and his associates to weaken the power of those whom they knew well beheld them with contempt and indignation. The propositions of the freebooters from the Borders were readily assented to by Cochrane, who confessed that he also dreaded Albany's power, and promised that, at a convenient time, he would endeavour to accomplish their mutual purpose. The minion was farther flattered by

a suitable sum of money ; and from that time he laboured with great assiduity to effect a discord between James and his brother. Knowing the King's superstitious belief in witchcraft and prophecy, he privately stimulated an old woman to pass herself off as a witch before the King, who predicted to James that he would one day be slain by his own kindred. This prediction heightened the King's superstitious terrors, and his suspicions immediately alighted on his brothers. \* The prophecy, aggravated by the artful insinuations of Cochrane and his associates, made a great impression on the King, who soon began to recollect various actions and expressions of Albany which seemed to him to establish the fact. As it was the interest of those minions to ruin the Earl of Mar also, that prince was not forgotten. It was brought to the King's recollection, that Mar had often ridiculed him, and spoken in language which sufficiently proved that he and his brother had a design against his life. But a much more serious charge was brought against Mar, and one which at once roused every superstitious feeling of James. He was accused of using magical arts against the King's life,—that he associated with notorious witches and sorcerers,—and that he was concerned in the consuming of a waxen image of the King

\* Lindsay of Pitscottie, p. 116, 117. Buchanan (lib. xii.) gives a different account. He traces the enmity of James to his brothers, to the prediction of one Andrew, a Flemish astrologer, who was high in favour with the King, and who had declared that “a lion should be killed by his own whelps.” This emblem, however, could not apply to Albany and Mar ; but if it was a real prediction, it was certainly verified in a remarkable manner.



before a fire, thus endeavouring to affect the King's health by magic.

Mar, who was very young, was probably in complete ignorance of those absurd and superstitious practices in witchcraft; still less, perhaps, did he ever imagine that he was the subject of such accusations. The real cause, however, of the King's enmity towards his brothers, for it is hardly possible to conceive it to have resulted from the above traditions, is unknown, but it was attended with disastrous consequences. From a prince, observes Buchanan on this subject with great truth, of considerable genius and good hopes, and as yet not wholly depraved, the King degenerated into a cruel tyrant; for when his mind was filled with these suspicions, he reckoned his nearest kindred, and the best of his nobility, his greatest enemies. Be this as it may, Albany and Mar were apprehended at the King's instance, under the pretence of being concerned in a plot against the royal authority and life. This arbitrary conduct of James still farther incensed the nobles against him and his minions, and strengthened the confederacy against them, inasmuch as the two brothers had, in reality, no great connection with the intended conspiracy against the crown. It has indeed been asserted, that Albany was concerned in a treasonable correspondence with England, which was the cause of his imprisonment; and could the fact be ascertained, it would vindicate James. But the fact is doubtful; for though Albany had, on various occasions, applied the epithet of *bastard* to the King, and afterwards assumed the royal title, there is no evidence that he did so previous to 1479. The truth ap-

pears to be, that the minions of James had preposessed him against his brothers, by alarming his superstitious fears, and by laying before him false representations. Whatever were the causes of this rash procedure, James was to be stained with a brother's blood. It is somewhat remarkable, that three contemporary sovereigns of England, France, and Scotland, were each of them in the same situation. Edward IV., on the most frivolous grounds, deprived his brother, the Duke of Clarence, of his life; the only favour granted to that prince, was his being permitted to choose the manner of his death, and he was accordingly drowned in a butt of Malmsey wine. Louis XI. procured, among his other acts of tyranny, the assassination or murder of the Duke of Guienne; and James III. of Scotland scrupled not, as we shall subsequently see, to condemn his brother, the Earl of Mar, under the pretence that he associated with witches to deprive him of life. In the present age, the accusation of witchcraft only excites the smile of ridicule; but we must not forget, that the reign of James was early in the history of improvement.—In a more enlightened era, and under a better system, the belief in witchcraft or sorcery universally prevailed, and is not, perhaps, in some districts of Scotland wholly eradicated. James VI. wrote a book against it, and maintained that witchcraft was the greatest of crimes. The Presbyterians were most vigilant in their endeavours to procure the condemnation of witches; and they actually, among their other acts of fanatical intolerance, burnt a poor old woman in Edinburgh, who had cured Archbishop Adamson, of St Andrews, of a dangerous disease, by the application of some simple herbs. The



statutes of the Kirk are furious in their anathemas against it ; even Sir George Mackenzie sets forth, that witchcraft is a most horrible crime, and ought to be punished ; and that no person can doubt for a moment that there is such a crime as witchcraft, since the laws condemn it. So late as 1722, a poor woman became a victim in Scotland to this absurd superstition. Finally, in this digression, the sect of Presbyterian dissenters in Scotland called Seceders, published an act of their Associate Presbytery in 1743, which was reprinted at Glasgow in 1766. In this there is what they call their annual confession of sins ; and besides the sedition and extravagant language which it contains, the Seceders lamented, among other grievous calamities, national and personal, that “ *the penal statutes against witches have been repealed by Parliament, contrary to the express law of God !* ” In this, however, the Seceders of the last century were greatly mistaken. The “ penal statutes against witchcraft,” have not been repealed to this day, but common sense has repealed them. The zealots of the Associate Presbytery in 1743 and in 1766, ought to have lived in the days of James III. or James VI. Both of these monarchs would have given them the benefit of “ *the law of patronage.* ”

## CHAPTER II.

More than a crown true worth should be esteemed.

One Fortune gives, the other is our own :

By which the mind from anguish is redeemed,

When Fortune's goods are by herself o'erthrown. "

*Monarchic Tragedies, by Sir W. Alexander,  
Earl of Stirling.*

THE two brothers of the King, thus intended to become the victims of superstition by a worthless minion and his associates, were speedily apprehended. The Duke of Albany was committed a prisoner to Edinburgh Castle, and the Earl of Mar was seized in his bed by the King's orders, and confined in the Castle of Craigmillar, in the vicinity of the metropolis, at that time a fortress of great strength. The Castle of Dunbar, which belonged to Albany, yielded to the King after a short siege, at which the Lairds of Luss, Sauchie, and Craigie-Wallace, and a gentleman named Ramsay, of the King's army, were slain. The garrison, unable to hold out, and not choosing to trust to James' leniency, made their escape by night in fishing boats to the English coast.

But the Earl of Mar was destined to be the only victim of the King's superstition. The youth of this prince, for he was almost a mere boy, demands the passing tribute of compassion for his

melancholy fate. Without a fair and open trial by his peers, but in a private council, which appears to have consisted chiefly of Cochrane and his associates, whose interest it was to effect the ruin of both princes, the unfortunate Mar was condemned to die for associating with witches, and practising magical arts, to affect the King's life. He was brought from the Castle of Craigmillar, the place of his confinement, to the Canongate of Edinburgh, in 1479, where, in the public street, a vein was cut, and he was allowed to bleed to death in a bath. This murder was attempted to be justified by sundry executions of witches which followed, who all confessed that Mar had dealings with them to destroy the King by incantations. They acknowledged that they had made a waxen image of the King, which they placed before a slow fire, and persuaded themselves that, in proportion as it consumed, the King's health would decay. As witchcraft was the current belief of the age, the execution of Mar does not seem to have excited any disgust among the people. It is supposed that this is the first instance of the execution of witches in Scotland: Buchanan says, that twelve women were executed, all of the lowest condition. This cause of Mar's death was given out only to the vulgar; but, according to the same writer, he was apprehended and executed for speaking too rashly on the state of the kingdom.

A fate equally fatal, though not perhaps similar, most probably awaited Albany, as he was the principal object of resentment to James' minions, had he not contrived to make his escape from the Castle of Edinburgh. In that fortress he had been committed a prisoner, and deprived of holding any

communication or intercourse save in the presence of his keepers. Notwithstanding this vigilance, Albany did not despair. A French vessel, probably procured by his friends, appeared in the Frith of Forth, and anchored in the roadstead off Newhaven, a village at a short distance from the seaport of Leith, and at that time little frequented, being only a place of resort for fishing-boats on the coast. The captain of the vessel, being in the plot, pretended that he had a cargo of excellent wines on board, and despatched one of the crew to the Castle, with a message to the Duke, informing him that he might have the first choice. An order was of course given for two small casks of Malmsey—a wine at that time in great repute, and the casks, in order to remove suspicion, contained not more than two gallons. In the one cask, the captain enclosed a secret writing covered with wax, containing instructions to the Duke, and in the other, some fathoms of rope by which he was to effect his escape. The Duke's servant was confidentially intrusted with the secret; and as he had been employed by Albany as his messenger to the captain, the latter communicated to him more at large certain instructions for his master.

The King himself lodged in the Castle at the time, and the exploit was the more hazardous, as the only chance of escape was by getting over the wall unobserved by the numerous attendants who formed his retinue. On the night appointed for the attempt, the Governor of the fortress, having ordered the gates to be shut, set the watch on the battlements, and proceeded to the royal apartments to receive the orders of the King. The Duke, whose sensations were not the most

agreeable, more especially as he had been positively assured by his emissaries and friends that he was to be executed the following day, that evening entertained the Governor and his friends at supper, having invited them to try his wine, and his sole hope lay in their intoxication. Albany and his servant contrived to conceal their own abstemiousness, while they repeatedly plied their guests with the intoxicating liquor. They sat to a late hour, till the rest of the garrison were sunk in slumber. At length, according to Lindsay of Pitscottie, when the guests were completely intoxicated, the Duke made a sign to his domestic, and starting from his seat, he suddenly attacked the Governor, whom he struck down with his weapon, and slew him, and two of his attendants, with his one hand. His domestic also assisted him to despatch the odious guests. They then rushed out to the most retired place on the Castle wall, where they would be the least observed by the sentinels; and having fixed the rope, the domestic first hazarded the dangerous descent. But the rope was too short, and, from the darkness of the night, the great height was not clearly ascertained, in consequence of which the domestic fell, and broke his thigh-bone. He called out to the Duke to avoid a similar fate by lengthening the rope. Albany ran to his apartment, and seizing the sheets on his bed, he increased the length of the rope by tying them together, and descended from the wall of the fortress in safety. His first object was to provide for his faithful domestic, whose misfortune precluded him from accompanying him in his flight. He carried him on his back, for more than a mile to a place of safety, after

which he proceeded, with due speed, to Newhaven. On a signal being given, a boat put off from the vessel, which received Albany, who thus narrowly escaped his brother's vengeance. The captain immediately sailed for France, where the fugitive prince arrived in safety, and was honourably received by Louis IX.

In the morning, when the rope was discovered hanging over the battlements, the alarm was given in the Castle, and the sentinels immediately proceeded to the Governor's apartments. But he was not to be found. Suspicions of Albany's flight being raised, they ran to the place of his confinement. They found the door of the apartment open, and the first object they beheld was one of the Governor's servants lying weltering in his blood. They soon perceived the bodies of that officer himself, and his two other attendants dreadfully scorched, for, according to Lindsay of Pit-scottie, they had been thrown into the fire-place by Albany and his domestic in the struggle. The tidings were soon conveyed to the King, who, surprised at this escape of Albany, as it were from his own presence, refused to believe it till he saw the bodies of the men, and the means by which the Duke's escape had been effected. Still conceiving, however, that the fugitives might probably be concealed in the Castle, the gates were shut, and a most vigilant search was made, but in vain. Horsemen were then sent out in all directions throughout the adjacent country, with promises of liberal rewards if they apprehended him; but their exertions met with the same success. In the mean time, a man from Leith, who happened to have some business in the Castle during the day, informed

the King's attendants that a boat had put off from the French vessel in the roadstead, and taken on board some persons from Newhaven, after which the vessel immediately sailed down the Frith, and stood out to sea. This being deemed a satisfactory explanation of the whole matter, no farther search was made.

There are few persons who know the Castle of Edinburgh, who will not be surprised at this daring exploit of Albany. Situated on an immense rock which terminates the hill towards the west on which the ancient city is built, the Castle is totally inaccessible save on the east, where is the public entrance from the city. On the south, and especially on the north, the rock is perpendicular, and at that time it was almost surrounded by the lake now drained, called the North Loch, on which there was a ferry-boat, to carry passengers to the opposite side, on which the new city is now built. The escape was effected towards the south-west part of the rock, and even there it must have been sufficiently hazardous; after which, having carried his faithful domestic to a place of safety, Albany betook himself across the sequestered fields, where extends the suburb of Stockbridge, to Newhaven. He must, indeed, have been aware of his danger; and the hazard which he encountered evidently proves that James had determined to bring him to execution. If Lindsay is to be credited, the fact is indisputable. According to him, at nine o'clock on the morning which succeeded Albany's escape, a number of the Lords of the Council proceeded to the Castle, to arrange the preparations for the Duke's execution, and to re-



ceive the King's commands as to the place where it was to be done. But they found the garrison in a commotion, and James thus unwillingly on his part saved from a double act of fratricide. They were astonished when they learned the cause; and not a few of them feared that the Duke might be able, at some future period, to take ample revenge for their enmity. There were among them, however, some who rejoiced at Albany's flight, and who hoped that they would yet see him in prosperous circumstances. The King was the principal person who lamented the Duke's flight, his fears being excited by the prediction of the pretended witch, and still thinking that his life was in danger as long as his brother lived. The only proceeding now instituted against Albany was the sentence of forfeiture, which gratified the Homes and Hepburns, the original excitors of the quarrel, but made the power of the minions by whom James was surrounded, and who in this instance had done their utmost to ruin Albany, the more exposed to a complete overthrow.

But it must not be concealed that Albany's subsequent conduct justifies the supposition that he was a considerable party in the confederacy against the King. Those transactions, however, will be noticed in the sequel. In the midst of several negociations with Edward of England, James devoted himself to his favourite pursuits. The turbulent state of England made the wars between the two countries less frequent, and Scotland was for a period in a state of comparative tranquillity. The Castle of Stirling became at this time the King's chief residence, and his taste for architecture prompted him to adorn that ancient



seat of Scottish royalty with elegant buildings. He founded in it a college of secular priests, called the Chapel-Royal, which consisted of a dean or provost, an archdean, a subdean, a treasurer, chanter, subchanter, and other officers; and the deanery of the Chapel-Royal was awarded to the Bishops of Galloway *ex officio*, on which account, perhaps, it was, that during the establishment of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and after the foundation of the See of Edinburgh, the Bishops of Galloway followed in the order of precedence after the two Archbishops of St Andrew's and Glasgow and the Bishop of Edinburgh, the others ranking according to the order of their consecration. The original foundation of the Chapel-Royal of Stirling by James III. consisted of eight ecclesiastics and three singing-boys; but he afterwards doubled the number, and it consisted eventually of sixteen ecclesiastics and six singing-boys. The reason assigned by Lindsay of Pitscottie for this increase of the foundation is illustrative of the habits of James. "He doubled them," says that writer, "to the effect that they should be ever ready, the one half to pass with him wherever he pleased, that they might sing and play to him, and hold him merry; and the other half should remain at home, in the said chapel, to sing and pray for him and his successors." Among other new edifices which James erected in the Castle, besides repairing many that were hastening to decay, he built the noble hall still entire, which in those days was deemed a magnificent structure, called the Parliament House, one hundred and twenty feet long, the roof of which is covered with oak of admirable workmanship, elegantly carved, according

to the fashion of the age; and at the distance of nearly four centuries it is not much decayed. It may be here observed, that the College, or Chapel-Royal, founded by James III., was demolished in 1594, by his successor James VI., when the present chapel was erected, which is now employed as the Armoury.

But James, while thus employed in his favourite pursuits, was hastening to his ruin. He still persisted in his attachment to unworthy minions; and Cochrane at length became his chief favourite and minister. Through him alone could the royal favour be procured; and he who, as a servant of the court, would have been suitably rewarded for the edifices he erected as master-mason by a pension, or by employment, was exalted by the imprudent King above those haughty nobles whose birth was their exulting boast. The height of power to which this upstart was elevated, procured for him numerous presents from the ambitious, the flattering, and those who sued for his influence; and he soon acquired wealth which far exceeded that of any peer in the kingdom. All the proceedings of government emanated through him; nothing was transacted in the council without his consent; and it was as dangerous to oppose this haughty minion, as it was impossible to satisfy his avarice by liberal presents. So great was his influence with James, that he was permitted to coin a species of money of his own, called *black money*, which was one of the causes of his own ruin and that of his master, the circulation of which often threatened to excite insurrections among the people, who refused what they termed the *Cochrane plack*. When it was represented to him that this coin would soon be

prohibited, he was wont to observe with haughtiness, that "its circulation would cease the day he was hanged,"—an event which he, in the fulness of his security, considered improbable, but which was truly verified.

This man had been long an object of hatred and contempt to the nobles, and his elevation was to them mortifying and humiliating; but they were exasperated when they beheld him raised to the peerage, and the earldom of Mar purchased by him from the King's avarice, with the wealth which he had so ignobly acquired. The title thus bestowed on Cochrane by James was perhaps the most unfortunate he could have selected; and the nobles scowled with unrelenting hatred on what they were disposed to consider a marked insult to their order, in seeing James thus bestow on an ignoble minion the title borne by his own brother, who had so lately been a victim to his superstition. The execrations of the people followed this despicable elevation and increase of power, which, though now the infallible prelude to his certain destruction, the new Earl of Mar continued to exercise with his wonted tyranny, avarice, and insolence. Those places and situations in the court which had formerly been awarded by the Scottish sovereigns to the sons of high-born men, were given by Cochrane to his own associates; and the pious prelates and dignitaries of the Church lamented that the simoniacal purchase of the vacant benefices filled the coffers of the minion, and intruded into the sacred office unprincipled men, who were totally incapable and reckless of discharging the sacred duties of religion.

A number of the nobles and barons speedily

assembled to consider the state of affairs, for they had found that personal access to James was almost impossible, he being vigilantly guarded by his favourite. The result was, the appointment of a deputation to wait on the King, with a representation of the state of the kingdom. The deputation was admitted into the royal presence, and its members tendered a detail of their grievances. They entreated James to dismiss those from his councils who corrupted him by their dishonesty and avarice, and promoted their own interests more than those of the kingdom. They besought him to trust to the loyalty of the nobles in the administration of justice and defence against his enemies ; and they proffered him their lives and fortunes to maintain the country against every invader. But they declared, that if those requests were refused, they would be guiltless of whatsoever misery and misfortunes the kingdom might be visited.

The answer of James was far from being satisfactory. He informed them, that those who counselled him in the government were peers like themselves ; and that those who attended him pleased him for the time, because he could not see better persons on whom to bestow his favours. He declared that he would dismiss none of his attendants at their pleasure, for he believed them to be true and trust-worthy ; nor was he inclined to place much reliance on this petition, for he had found too often that his nobles were far from being united among themselves, and that when the one half were with him, the other half were against him. Yet, he said, in a full assembly of the peers, when they were all unanimous, he would willingly make use of their counsel in all things

appertaining to the defence of the government, and the preservation of the liberties of the kingdom.

The nobles pretended to assent to this reply, while, by their crafty dissembling, they were concealing their resentments. It is unfortunately too true, that James, like his predecessors, had frequently been harassed by their tendency to faction; and unanimity in the national councils of Scotland is a thing to be wholly unlooked for in the history of its sovereigns. Even on occasions of great national emergency, when they were in the field, and about to draw the sword against the invaders of their liberties, a trivial dispute about precedence often excited a furious contention, which weakened their attachments, and too frequently ended in disasters. Much more so it was in the national councils, where a mutual jealousy invariably existed among them, and when the independence of feudal power often provoked to retaliations and aggressions which were not forgotten for generations. It was probably on these accounts, that James felt an attachment to his minions, whose obsequiousness afforded a striking contrast to the turbulence and haughty spirit of his peers; but the misfortunes of the King was, that he knew not how to accommodate himself to circumstances—he forgot, what his grandfather James I. well knew, that men vested with the feudal power were likely, when exasperated, to become dangerous enemies, and gladly seize the first opportunity to rid themselves of the obnoxious controul of those whom they despised, and by whom their own ambitious purposes were frustrated.

On this occasion, whatever might be their secret

animosities, they were collected, and firm in their purposes: and they were shortly to exhibit one of those defiances of the regal authority, which are conspicuous in the Scottish annals of every reign. From the reign of the first, as it has been well remarked, to the termination of that of the fifth James, the Scottish nobles were accustomed to seize occasions when they set no limits to the ebullitions of their resentment. That their proceedings were unconstitutional, and insults to the government, cannot be doubted, inasmuch as the camp and the field of battle too frequently witnessed their mutual dissensions, and the interests of their country were neglected to gratify their revenge. But those proceedings strikingly mark the state of the times; and the nobles of Scotland were warriors, not statesmen. Unaccustomed to the forms of debate in the day of peace, and in the assembly of the states, they oftener appealed to the sword than to reason. From the constitution of the Parliaments, they were too liable to the royal influence; and it was not to be thought that men, whose education unfitted them for other scenes than those of strife and warfare, could contend in the assemblies of the nation with the spiritual peers, whose habits fitted them for declamation, and who would more willingly coincide with the sovereign, the source of all their dignities. It can hardly, then, be a subject of surprise, that many disgraceful actions are recorded in the pages of their history, which, in their impatience of controul, generally terminated in misfortune and blood.

The Duke of Albany, as has been observed, after his remarkable escape from the Castle of Edinburgh, proceeded directly to France, where he



was honourably received by Louis XI. So little did his disgrace with James affect his interests, that all his expenses were defrayed from the French treasury; and, although, married to Lady Catharine Sinclair, daughter of the Earl of Orkney, who was still alive, he scrupled not to form a matrimonial alliance with Anne daughter of the Count of Auvergne. A misunderstanding had in the meanwhile taken place between England and Scotland, occasioned most probably by Edward discontinuing to pay the marriage-portion of the Princess Cecilia, according to the terms of the treaty, to whom the eldest son of James, the Duke of Rothsay, was betrothed. Tired of his wife, Albany passed over into England, where he found the English sovereign exasperated at the Scots, and the Borders ravaged by mutual aggressions and forays. This was in 1482, two years before Edward's brother, the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards the notorious Richard III., had been appointed lieutenant-general of the North, and placed at the head of the army against the Scots. In 1480, when Richard first received this appointment, hostilities had not actually commenced, but he was ordered to have the army in readiness for the ensuing year. On that year the campaign began, and the English army entered Scotland, where they burnt sixty villages, sailed up the river Forth, captured eight vessels, and consigned to the flames the village of Blackness, on the southern shores of the river, in the county of Linlithgow, where is the castle of that name; after which the invaders sought their native shores.\* But the cam-

\* "Bot God rewenged their perfidey," observes Sir

paign ended with little glory on either side, for while the English were in the Firth, the famous Admiral Andrew Wood of Largo destroyed several English vessels, and the Scottish Borderers carried fire and sword into England. On the following year, 1482, the same in which Albany proceeded to England, the English were not disposed to relinquish the war, but were preparing for another invasion. Instigated by the artifices of the unprincipled Gloucester, Albany, who seems to have considered his affairs as desperate, hesitated not to form a treaty with Edward IV. disgraceful to himself and to his country, in which he styles himself "Alexander King of Scotland," and promises to perform homage for his kingdom to the English King, from whom he receives it, cedes to Edward several of the Border counties, relinquishes the town of Berwick, and finally, promises to marry the princess Cecilia, "provided he could clear himself of other women,"—a precaution highly necessary in his case, as he had already two wives alive. Edward promised to assist him in reducing Scotland, and to maintain him on the throne. Such was the secret treaty between Edward and Albany, aided by the perfidious Gloucester, who commanded the English army. The pretended causes of the war were, that the Earl of Douglas was still kept in exile, deprived of his honours,—that the Prince of Scotland (Duke of Rothsay) was to be delivered into the hands of the English monarch till his marriage with Cecilia,—that James had usurped the castles of Berwick,

James Balfour, "many of them being broken and drowned by tempest ere they could gaine home."



Roxburgh, Coldingham, and other fortresses on the Borders,—and that he refused to do homage to England. The secret instructions were, that Douglas must be restored to his honours—the prince sent into England before a certain day—the castle of Berwick surrendered—otherwise the war was to commence.

Those demands were of course refused by James, and the war was proclaimed. Albany, deluded by the English monarch, and allured by the prospect of a crown, joined the army of Edward under Gloucester, which assembled at Alnwick in Northumberland, and amounted to 22,000, or, according to some, 40,000 men. The van of the army was led by Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland. Albany and Gloucester were at the head of the middle division; and several of the English lords commanded the minor detachments.

The first object of attack was Berwick, which had been in the hands of the Scots since it had been ceded to them by Henry IV. when a refugee in Scotland. Thither Gloucester directed his march, and his formidable army appeared suddenly on the river-side, over against the town. As the town made no resistance, it was immediately seized; but the garrison in the Castle, refused to capitulate. Lord Stanley, Sir John Elrington, treasurer of the Household, and Sir William Parr, were left with 4000 men to carry on the siege; and Gloucester, with the rest of the army, accompanied by Albany, marched towards Edinburgh.

No sooner did James receive intelligence of the movements of the English army, than he proceeded to defend his kingdom. It was in the month

of July 1482 that the royal standard was displayed on the Borough Muir near Edinburgh, the usual rendezvous of the Scottish armies, and there fifty thousand men ranged themselves under the banner of their sovereign. The discontented nobles readily took the field with their retainers; but they had privately resolved to perform some bold deed, and revenge themselves on a sovereign towards whom their resentments were almost incurable.

The King, little suspecting their intentions, or that the friends of Albany were among them, put himself at the head of his army. He caused some pieces of artillery to be conveyed from the Castle; but the discontented nobles were again exasperated when they saw Cochrane intrusted with the command. This imprudence of the King was indeed inexcusable. In marching against the common enemy, it was his object rather to conciliate those feudal peers, whose retainers, if commanded by their chieftains, would set at defiance the King himself, than to increase their disaffection by the odious presence and pomp of Cochrane, which were considered as additional insults. But they stifled their resentments, and the Scottish warriors directed their course towards the Borders. They marched first to Soutra, in East Lothian, whence they proceeded to Lauder, a village in the Merse, or Berwickshire, where they encamped for the night between the church and the village.

On the morning after their arrival at Lauder, a secret council of the peers assembled. The old church of Lauder was the place of meeting—a church originally a Chapel of Ease to Channelkirk, or Children's kirk, so called, because dedicated to the Holy Innocents. It stood on the

north side of the town, opposite Lauder Fort, built by Edward I., surnamed Longshanks, during his campaigns in Scotland. The chief nobles mentioned who were present, were the Earls of Argyle, Angus, Huntly, Orkney, and Crawford, Lords Hume, Fleming, Gray, Drummond, Hailes, and Seton, Lord Evandale the Chancellor, and certain bishops. The ostensible object of their meeting was to consider what was to be done for the defence of the kingdom, and whether or not they ought to proceed with the King to the Borders; but in reality to devise some means of ridding themselves of the favourites, and of obtaining possession of James' person.

This council convened early in the morning, without the knowledge of the King. It was observed by some of the peers, says Lindsay, that James was "not their King, nor guided by them in their councils, but had elevated upstarts to the rank of nobles—that he had forfeited and banished the Duke of Albany his brother, and slain the Earl of Mar—and that Cochrane, a mason, had been raised to his dignity, which was an insult not to be endured." A speech is reported by Buchanan to have been delivered by the Earl of Angus, in which he inveighs against the King's government and his favourites. Lord Gray, however, opened the dangerous debate with the following fable. "The mice," said he, "consulted what measures they should adopt to escape from the cat, their inveterate and tyrannical enemy. It was proposed that a bell should be hung from her neck, to give due warning of her approach; but the difficulty was to find a mouse courageous

enough to fasten the bell." \* No sooner had this fable been delivered by Gray, which the peers present failed not to apply to themselves, than Angus, in whose veins the blood of the House of Douglas flowed, instantly exclaimed, "*I shall bell the cat.*" From this phrase, Angus was afterwards surnamed, in the homely phraseology of the country, Archibald Bell-the-Cat. A murmur of approbation ran throughout the assembly; and several of the peers, laying their hands on their swords, exclaimed, "To our arms against the public enemy." The result of their deliberation was, that the King's person should be secured, and conducted back to the Castle of Edinburgh; and that Cochrane, with the other favourites, should be seized and hanged over the Bridge of Lauder.

The council, however, was not kept so secret, but that it came to the knowledge of the King, who felt no inconsiderable alarm on account of the meeting at so early an hour. He rose in great fear from his couch, and asking, what was to be done? summoned Cochrane to his presence. Cochrane attended, and, after consulting for a little with the King, he was sent to the council to observe their movements, and learn the nature of their deliberations. He repaired to the church where the peers were assembled in his usual pomp, little anticipating that he was devoted to destruction. He was attended, according to Pitscottie, by three hundred men, all clad in white livery, with black fillets, and armed with battle-axes, that they might be known as the

\* Hume of Godscroft's History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus, folio, edit. 1644.

retainers of the new Earl of Mar. His own dress displayed his upstart magnificence. He was clad in a riding-cloak of black velvet, and wore a chain of gold around his neck worth five hundred crowns. His hunting-horn was enriched with gold at both ends, and a precious stone glittered in the centre. His helmet was carried before him, overlaid with gold. \* In this pomp he proceeded to the church of Lauder, where the peers were assembled, and, approaching the door, he commanded one of his attendants to knock with great authority. Sir Robert Douglas of Lochleven stood guard within, who, on inquiring the cause of this rude noise, was answered by Cochrane—" 'Tis I, the Earl of Mar." Rejoicing at this fortunate circumstance, for which they ardently wished, Cochrane and some of his attendants were ordered to be admitted. Angus instantly advanced towards him, and seizing him by the gold chain which hung around his neck, he twisted it with such firmness as nearly to strangle Cochrane, exclaiming, "A rope would become thee better." † Douglas of Lochleven seized his hunt-

\* Lindsay's description of this minion's profusion is amusing. "Himself was clad in a riding-pie of black velvet, with a great chain of gold about his neck to the value of five hundred crowns; and four blowing-horns with both the ends of gold and silk, set with precious stones. His horn was tipped with fine gold at every end, and a precious stone, called a beryl, hanging in the midst. This Cochrane had his heument (helmet) borne before him overgilt with gold, and so were all the rest of his horns; and all his pallions were of fine canvas of silk, and the cords thereof fine turned silk, and the chains upon his pallions were double overgilt with gold."

† In the History of the Houses of Douglas and Angus, by David Hume of Godscroft, (Edinburgh, folio, 1644),

ing horse, and told him that "he had been too long a hunter of mischief." Cochrane, finding himself thus roughly handled, asked, "My Lords, is this jest or earnest?" To which they replied, "Thou shalt soon find that it is in good earnest; for thou and thy associates have too long abused the favour of our sovereign. No longer shalt thou enjoy thy greatness; but thou and thy accomplices shall have your deserved reward."

They soon secured the new made Earl, after which they despatched some of their friends to the King's abode, who amused James with smooth speeches, while their followers were apprehending Cochrane's associates. On Leonard, Rogers, Torphichen, Preston, (the only gentleman amongst them,) and others, they soon laid their hands; and, dragging them out to the bridge, beneath which runs the rivulet Lauder or Leader, they were all immediately hanged over it. So odious, according to Buchanan, had those minions become, that the whole army exulted in their execution, exclaiming, "Hang them, the rogues!" Nay, so anxious were the soldiers for their death, that, when ropes were wanted to hang them, so sudden had been the resolution to put them to death, they all offered their horse-bridles and baggage-tackle, and many of them strove to make the first offer. The execution, it would appear, was performed before the King's eyes.\* Cochrane was brought out last, his hands bound with a rope.

Angus is reported to have said to Cochrane:—"This chain doth not become a man of your rank; but I shall ere long give you one that will become you to wear far better." p. 226.

\* Lindsay of Pitscottie, p. 125.



Here, however, he exhibited his empty pride. He desired to have the rope exchanged for one of the silken cords of his own tent ; but he was answered, that he was a traitor, and deserved no better. He was conducted to the bridge, and hanged above his companions. \*

Sir John Ramsay of Balmain, a young man, was the only one of the King's favourites who escaped the indignant resentment of the peers. He leaped on the King's saddle, and clasped his person, and was saved at the earnest request of James himself, who pleaded for him on account of his extreme youth, he being only eighteen years of age. The genius and accomplishments of this youth had recommended him to James ; and he was destined to be forfeited for his attachment to his master, after the disaster of Bannockburn or Sauchie. He was created Lord Bothwell by the King ; and, in 1483-4, he sat in Parliament as a peer by that title. †

Having thus rid themselves of the odious favourites, the nobles proceeded to the King, whose

\* It is proper to mention, that the bridge of Lauder, at which this execution took place, is not the present one—it having been erected within the last century. The piles of the old one may be observed at some distance.

† This nobleman was lineal ancestor of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Balmain, Bart. Member of Parliament for the county of Kincardine, who died without issue at his seat of Halley, in Yorkshire, Feb. 12. 1806, in the 90th year of his age, and was succeeded in the greater part of his English and Scottish estates, by his nephew Alexander Burnett of Strachan, second son of his sister Catherine Ramsay and Sir Thomas Burnett of Leys, Bart. Mr Burnett thereafter assumed the name of Ramsay, and was created a baronet of Great Britain in 1806.

person they resolved to secure, as all confidence between him and them was now ended. The house in which James was seized is still standing.\* He was conveyed to the Castle of Edinburgh, where he was placed under a respectful restraint, and the army dismissed, until he should give ample security that he would not revenge the death of his favourites, to which he evinced, for a considerable time, the most obstinate repugnance.†

Such was the issue of the campaign of the Scots against the English under Gloucester, which afforded an opportunity for the Scottish nobles to neglect the defence of their country for the gratification of their resentments. It was a boisterous ebullition of passion, similar instances of which are frequently to be found in the Scottish annals. But, at the same time, it must not be denied that the imprudence of James was great, and that, if he depended on his nobles for assistance against the common enemy, he ought to have removed his minions from the camp, and trusted to the valour of his army. It may be true, however, after all,

\* It was standing in 1819 when Principal Playfair published his *Geographical and Statistical Description of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 59.

† It is asserted by some writers, that the King voluntarily dismissed his army, and shut himself up in the Castle of Edinburgh for security. But the imprisonment of James is certain, from Ruddiman's *Notes on Buchanan*, vol. i. p. 445, and the Preface by the same writer to *Anderson's Diplomata*; also, *Lindsay of Pitscottie*, p. 125, 126, and *Sir James Balfour*, vol. i. p. 206, 207. "This tragedy acted," says the last writer, "the haill army incontinent dislodges, and brings the King prissoner with them to Edinbrughe Castell, and committs him to the custody of Johne, Earl of Athol."



that though he had done so, the campaign would still have terminated ingloriously. The partisans of Albany were numerous in the army, and the remembrance of the King's studied neglect might have induced them to yield the contest, and to have consented to terms not the most advantageous for their country. It was a remarkable instance of the power and influence which the aristocracy possessed over their followers, that the King was conveyed to the Castle of Edinburgh without a single murmur of the army.

The accusations against those favourites, for their trials were despatched in the most summary manner, were, 1. Of causing the King to execute his brother, John Earl of Mar. 2. That they had excited the King against, and caused him to banish his brother, Alexander Duke of Albany. 3. That they had sowed dissensions between the King and his nobles. 4. That they had enticed him to superstition, witchcraft, and magic, to the offence of God, and dishonour of religion. And, lastly, that they had persuaded him to coin a certain kind of brass, of no value, which the people called *black coin*:—"which fact," observes Hume of Godscroft, "of all the others was the most odious to the vulgar; for hereupon had ensued great dearth of corn and victuals, while the owners did choose rather to suffer their grain to rot in their garners, than, under the name of selling, to give them to the buyers; for they thought it a gift, and not a sale."

## CHAPTER III.

“ Our hapless king that wears the crown,  
Full boldly shall the battel bide ;  
His banners shall be beaten down,  
And have no hole his head to hide.  
The starns three that day shall die  
That bears the heart in silver sheen,  
Nor riches, gold, nor silver fee,  
Can lengthen his life one hour, I ween.”

SIR THOMAS THE RYMER.

THE English army under Richard of Gloucester, and accompanied by Albany, marched to Edinburgh, having already obtained possession of Berwick. In that city they found affairs in confusion ; the King a prisoner in the Castle, and the administration of the government assumed by a party of the peers. They encamped at Restalrig, in the vicinity of the city.

At Albany's request, Gloucester spared the citizens from being pillaged by the English army, and Albany himself was pardoned by the acting government, on returning to his allegiance. The approach of Gloucester to Edinburgh resembled a splendid triumph rather than an invasion. Instead of carrying the treaty between Edward and Albany into effect, which purported to place the latter on the throne, the conduct of the English is not a little mysterious. Gloucester demanded

from James the performance of his stipulations with England; but the King, being a prisoner, returned no answer. At length, however, a new treaty was concluded between James and Edward, and after a short residence in the Scottish metropolis, Gloucester returned to London. It was stipulated, that the marriage between the Duke of Rothsay and the Princess Cecilia, should still take place; and the citizens of Edinburgh, who had all along remained firm in their loyalty, became bound to repay Edward the dowry he had formerly given in contemplation. As the marriage eventually failed, the citizens honourably discharged their obligations. Berwick was perpetually surrendered to the English.

For nine months the King had been confined in the Castle of Edinburgh, where Albany, overcome by the importunities of the queen, resolved to set his brother at liberty. Accordingly, aided by the citizens of Edinburgh, the fortress was surprised, and the King released from his durance. For this service, a reconciliation was effected between James and the Duke, and the latter had the titles of Earl of Mar and Lord of Garioch conferred upon him, "as the reward of his loyalty, affection, and service." It was on this occasion, too, that Edinburgh received her most important charter from a grateful sovereign, confirming her ample privileges. The office of hereditary sheriff within the city, with complete jurisdiction, was conferred on the provost, with all the fines and forfeitures arising from the administration of that office. The magistrates and council were also empowered to make laws at pleasure for the welfare of the town; they were exempted from cer-

tain duties ; and entitled to exact customs at the port of Leith. In return for this ample charter, all that the King demanded from the civic rulers was the annual celebration of a funeral mass for the repose of the souls of his predecessors, himself, and successors, in the collegiate church of the city dedicated to St Giles.

But this apparent reconciliation between James and Albany was of no long continuance, and the latter soon returned to his former intrigues and practices. The superstitious piety of James induced him to propose a pilgrimage to the relics of St John at Amiens in France ; and for this purpose he obtained a safe-conduct from Edward to pass through England on his way. In the Parliament which met in December 1482, and which appears to have been entirely under Albany's influence, a recommendation was given to James, on the 11th December, to constitute the Duke Lieutenant-General and Governor of the kingdom during his absence. With this recommendation he complied, though subsequent events occurred which hindered James from performing his devotions at the shrine of St John. But Albany, notwithstanding his power, knew well that his situation was precarious ; his conduct, seemingly influenced by the treasonable treaty he had made with Edward when in exile, and his desire for the crown, had disgusted the nobles, and excited the jealous suspicions of James. Perceiving that the loyal party were increasing, he secured a considerable military force, and contrived to excite disturbances in the West and Eastern Marches, in the hope that a war would ensue between the two countries. With this view he sent Archibald

Earl of Angus, surnamed *Bell-the-Cat*, from the affair at Lauder, Lord Gray, and Sir James Liddel of Halkerstone, to Edward, to renew the former treaty, the object of which was to depose James, to procure troops from Edward to conquer Scotland, and to place him on the throne, by the title of Alexander IV. This disgraceful treaty was accordingly renewed by Edward—Albany again engaged to marry one of that prince's daughters, and to assist him against France—the exiled Earl of Douglas was to be restored to his possessions—and Gloucester and the Earl of Northumberland were to invade Scotland. What might have been the result of this treasonable agreement, it is impossible to say; but the death of Edward, the murder of his two nephews in the Tower by the unprincipled Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., who began his infamous reign with blood,—terminated at once those intrigues of lawless ambition; and Richard was too much occupied with the discords of England, to find leisure to further the wild and treasonable schemes of Albany and his partisans. The Duke soon afterwards retired into England, where, finding all hopes of assistance from Richard in vain, and again endeavouring to excite a disturbance in Scotland, he finally departed for France, where he fell a few years afterwards at a tournament, leaving one son by the Countess of Auvergne, who inherited his unfortunate title, and who was destined to misgovern Scotland in the minority of James V. The honours and estates of Albany were annexed to the crown in 1487, but James did not long enjoy these accessions.

Without, however, detailing minutely the vari-

ous circumstances of this calamitous reign, which belong rather to the general history than to a detached narrative like the present, it is proper to observe, that the final departure of Albany did not abate the zeal of his partisans, and that of James' enemies. Had the King possessed the activity and dignity of some of his predecessors, his private pursuits would have been honourable to his taste ; and the great hall in Stirling Castle, and the chapel in the same fortress, united to his taste for music and the fine arts, would have been lasting memorials of his princely munificence among a people at that time on the threshold of improvement. The long-stifled resentments, however, were speedily to break out with overwhelming fury ; and Scotland was doomed to experience the scourge of an unnatural discord, induced by the imprudence of its sovereign, and the turbulent ambition of its nobles.

Several of the King's proceedings, after his release from the Castle of Edinburgh, had given great offence to the chief leaders of the nobility. He continued to live in ignoble privacy ; nor was he cured of his attachment to favourites by the fierce burst of resentment which had characterized the affair of Lauder Bridge. Though Albany had departed, his spirit was left behind, and James had not the prudence to provide against its excesses. After the final retreat of that prince, he issued an order that no nobleman should wear arms within the precincts of the court ;—his appointment of Ramsay, the favourite who had escaped at Lauder, to the office of captain of the royal guard, was viewed with no friendly feelings ; and a number of the nobles believed, or pretended to believe, that it



was the design of James to place Scotland under English influence. Though this last accusation was utterly groundless, it served as a sufficient pretext for their traitorous designs; and a confederacy was speedily formed, consisting of the Earls of Angus, Lennox, and Argyle, Lords Home, Hailes, Drummond, Lyle, and Gray; the object of which was to receive again the King's person, and to appoint the young Duke of Rothsay regent of the kingdom.

This confederacy was formed in 1485, but its leaders delayed their intentions for some time, till the rupture between them and the King became irreconcilable. In the meantime, James obtained possession of the Castle of Dunbar from the English; and in 1486 a treaty was concluded between him and Henry VII. of England, who had defeated and slain the usurper Richard III. at the battle of Bosworth Field. But James experienced a calamity that year in the death of his amiable queen, Margaret of Denmark, who was consigned to the tomb in the venerable abbey of Cambuskenneth. The confederacy, however, continued, though considerably disturbed by the league with England; and each of the nobles who composed it had his own peculiar causes of discontentment. The Earl of Angus was the very soul of the association, and Lord Home was induced to join it from a motive of private revenge. As it was the King's intention to endow the college or chapel-royal at Stirling, he purposed to bestow on it the revenues of the rich priory of Coldingham, at that time vacant. This priory was of great antiquity and wealth. It had had been rebuilt by King Edgar



in 1098, and was dedicated to the Virgin ; at the consecration Edgar assisted in person, and caused a house to be built for himself, the remains of which are still to be seen, and are called *Edgar's Walls*. Besides the extensive lands and other immunities belonging to this monastery, which were very considerable, the prior had a right to the teinds or tithes of no fewer than twenty-four parishes. A vacancy at this time induced James to seize on all its temporalities for the endowment of his college at Stirling ; and accordingly, he caused an act of parliament to be passed, discharging all his subjects to attempt any thing against the union of the chapel-royal at Stirling with the priory of Coldingham, under the penalties of high treason.

This mortally offended the Homes and Hepburns, as one of the former families had generally held the priory, and they had been long accustomed to view its lands, temporalities, and titles, as part of their hereditary possessions. The dispute had indeed lasted for some years, but it was only in the two last parliaments that the priory had been alienated. As this loss stripped the Homes of considerable revenues, it materially affected all the gentlemen of that name ; and they accordingly leagued under their chief, Lord Home, with their allies the Hepburns, at the head of whom was Lord Hailes. They entered into a combination, and bound themselves not to suffer any prior to take possession of Coldingham who was not a Home or a Hepburn. The power and influence of those two families were such as to render them a most important acquisition to the confederacy, and they contrived to make their own

quarrel that of the faction at large. Their emissaries sent abroad rumours, that the King was aiming at arbitrary power,—that notwithstanding all his protestations he was not to be trusted—that he had begun his attacks on their property by invading and seizing the ancient privileges of the Homes, which he had grasped more from hatred and avarice, than from any desire to increase the endowment of his chapel—and that, in short, he meditated a deep and terrible revenge for the affair at Lauder Bridge.

These misrepresentations of the King's intentions were sufficient to kindle anew the rankling animosities of the factious nobles. Angus, surnamed *Bell-the-Cat*, was, however, the chief ring-leader of the conspiracy, and his principal object was to get a person of sufficient influence to preside over his associates. In an invasion conducted by Albany and the exiled Earl of Douglas in 1484, the latter nobleman had been taken prisoner at Lochmaben fair, and had been ordered by James to spend the remainder of his days in the Abbey of Lindores in Fife. In this peaceful retreat Douglas first found happiness. To this nobleman, now old and infirm, Angus advised the conspirators to apply to head them; but the venerable Douglas was dead to ambition, and instead of encouraging them in their designs against the destroyer of his house, he exhorted them to abandon their rebellious intentions, expressing great contrition for his own past conduct. Finding, however, that his remonstrances were disregarded, this magnanimous nobleman (for he was the son of that Earl of Douglas who was stabbed in the Castle of Stirling by James II.), wrote to the various branches of his

family, particularly Douglas of Cavers, cautioning them not to enter the association.\* This great man survived this application only a few months. He died in peace in the Abbey of Lindores, without issue, on the 15th of April 1488, and in him ended the first branch of the illustrious and once powerful House of Douglas.

Thus baffled in their application, the conspirators were left to their own resources ; nor do they seem to have been in the least impressed by the remonstrances of Douglas. As Angus and Gray were, in reality, the principal traitors, Home had been induced to join the association from the circumstances already narrated. The Hepburns under Lord Hailes, were united to it from the same motives. To them were afterwards added Huntly, Errol, Marischal, and Lord Glamis, who, with the others already mentioned, constituted the association. The pretext for this conspiracy was as ridiculous as it was false, namely, that James intended to place his kingdom under English influence. The real causes were, hatred to the King, to dethrone and imprison him, and to elevate his son the Duke of Rothsay to the throne or the regency. Yet the circumstances of the kingdom favoured their pretext, and did them great service, by causing many of the moderate party to join them. The surrender of Berwick—the intended marriage between the Duke of Rothsay and the daughter of the queen-dowager of England—the harmony which existed between James and Henry—favoured the allegations of the conspirators, that

\* It is said that some of his original letters on this subject are still in existence.

Scotland was to become a province of England, and to be governed by an English force.

With the King there remained the Earls of Crawford, Monteith, Rothes, Athole, Caithness, Sutherland, and Buchan; Lords Forbes, Lovat, Maxwell, Ruthven, Erskine, Boyd, and Kilmaurs, with some other persons of great power, not then elevated to the peerage. James, indeed, appears to have been acquainted with the designs of the conspirators; but he wanted energy to prepare himself against the popular ferment. His conduct at this time is remarkable, and made his enemies charge the descendant of a race of heroes with cowardice; but, though the first of his name against whom this odious imputation was made, his conduct by no means justifies the accusation. His laxity or negligence, however, only caused his enemies to parade about the country with greater boldness, while he was shut up in the Castle of Stirling (some say Edinburgh) pursuing his favourite studies, heedless of the strong combination, and depending on the protection of the law, which the affair at Lauder Bridge might have taught him would most certainly be treated with contempt.

The factious peers assembled at Edinburgh, and the malignity of Buchanan has in consequence aspersed the character of James. He asserts that the King, who had affected to forget Angus' conduct at Lauder, invited him to the Castle, and proposed to him to cut off the rebel chiefs at one blow. But Angus, who conceived this to be a snare for his own destruction, though he seemingly reasoned with the King on the impolicy of this measure, and pretended to have no objections in assisting to

apprehend them, disclosed to his associates the intentions of the King, and joined them with his retainers. But the false colouring of this affair—that the King intended to assassinate them, is evident from the facts, and James was always averse to shed blood.

James, however, was at last roused from his lethargy. The confederates took the field, and all the counties south of the Forth were under their controul. The Earl of Angus, the only chief who could have assisted him in reducing the rebels, was at their head, and appointed places of meeting for all those who were inclined to enlist under their banners. Although summoned by the King to answer for their conduct at the proper tribunals, the insurgents treated his citations with contempt, tore them in pieces, abused and maltreated the messengers, and openly spurned the royal authority. The populous counties of Fife and Forfar were in a state of revolt; and those alone continued faithful to the King, north of the Grampian Mountains.

Distrusting all the Lowland counties, James resolved to visit the North, where the inhabitants remained true to their allegiance. He first, however, proceeded to Stirling, with the Duke of Rothsay, his son, then a youth of fifteen years of age; and, having sufficiently provided the Castle with military stores, he delivered the young prince to the care of Shaw of Sauchie, the governor, charging him to let no man enter the Castle till his return, nor to let the prince go out on any pretence whatsoever. He then returned to Edinburgh, the fortress of which he garrisoned in the like manner, committing to the care of the go-

vernor all his money; after which he proceeded to Leith, on his journey to the northern counties, and embarked in a vessel belonging to Sir Andrew Wood, to convey him over the Frith to the opposite shore. Unfortunately, the vessel in which he embarked had been engaged in the Flemish trade, and a report was immediately circulated, that, overcome by his fears, he had quitted the kingdom and fled to Flanders.—The insurgents, taking advantage of the consternation, mustered their forces, and advanced to Leith. There they seized and rifled the royal baggage, which was in readiness to be sent after the King, and found a large sum of money, which proved of great consequence to them in their affairs. They then proceeded to arm themselves from the King's stores, and advanced to the Castle of Dunbar, which they immediately took by surprise. They afterwards ravaged all the southern counties, particularly the Lothians and Tweeddale, rifling and plundering the houses of all who were not engaged in the insurrection.

While the insurgents were conducting themselves in this tumultuous manner, the King, who had summoned the counties of Fife, Forfar, and the district of Strathearn to attend his banner at a certain day, proceeded northward to Aberdeen. In his journey he held courts of justice, and was every where received with affection, particularly in the districts under the influence of the Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Marischal, who were devoted to his interests. The northern clans readily obeyed the summons of their sovereign, and marshalled themselves under the royal banner. The chiefs in those parts were busily engaged in mustering



their retainers, and the King had the prospect of a numerous army under his control. But as every day brought more alarming reports of the proceedings of the insurgents in the south, James had no time left for deliberation. He hastened to Perth, which he appointed the place for the mustering of his army, followed by his uncle, the Earl of Athol, the Earls of Huntly, Crawford, and Errol, with many northern chiefs, and, indeed, all the array of the northern counties. There he was joined by Lord Lindsay of the Byres,—an officer who had acquired considerable military reputation in France, with a thousand horsemen and three thousand foot. From this Baron it was, according to Pitscottie, that the King received the present of the fatal courser; and in presenting him to the King, he observed, that “if his Majesty were reduced to extremity, either to flee or pursue, that horse would surpass every other in Scotland, if the rider kept his saddle.” Lord Ruthven, too, who was at that time Sheriff of Strathearn, ancestor of the Earls of Gowrie, brought a thousand gentlemen on horseback to the King’s assistance, well armed, and provided with spears, a thousand bowmen, and a thousand armed men with long swords and coats of mail:—three thousand in all from the loyal town of Perth. The King found himself at the head of 30,000 men, and with this army he set out for Stirling against the rebels.

The insurgents being in possession of all the counties south of the Forth, had not, on their part, been idle. They had mustered their forces in the county of Linlithgow, or West Lothian, and had encamped near Blackness Castle, on the southern shores of the Frith of Forth. The fleet under the



command of Sir Andrew Wood of Largo having sailed up the Forth, the royal army passed over in those vessels; and having landed at Blackness, in April 1488, the King was joined by the few in the southern counties who continued in their allegiance. The contest was about to be decided by a battle, and an indecisive skirmish had taken place, in which several of the loyal chiefs eminently distinguished themselves; but the insurgents appear to have been aware of the superiority of the King's forces, and consented to an accommodation. Probably both parties were not sufficiently exasperated against each other, and therefore shrank from the last resource of shedding the blood of their countrymen. The Earl of Athole, the King's uncle, a nobleman trusted by both parties, effected a negociation, and surrendered himself as a hostage into the hands of the rebels. Though the terms of this accommodation are not mentioned by our historians, and indeed their whole account of this transaction is confused and contradictory, yet the fact of this temporary treaty is beyond dispute; and we know that Athole was confined for his loyalty in the Castle of Dunbar.\*

\* There is a document first published by Dr Henry, in the Appendix to vol. v. of his History of Great Britain, and inserted in the Appendix (No. 32) to vol. i. of Pinkerton's History, which is taken from the Records of Parliament in the Register Office, Edinburgh. It is entitled the "Pacification of Blackness," and contains nine articles, which were signed by the King's own hand, and presented in the first Parliament of James IV. Commission was granted to the Bishop of Aberdeen, Chancellor, the Earls of Huntly, Errol, Marischal, Lords Glamis and Alexander Lindsay, on the King's part, and the Bishop of Glasgow, the Earls of Angus, Argyle, Lords Hailes and Lyle, to conclude the accommodation. Red-

The two armies were disbanded, though the insurgents continued to meet in detached parties; and the King retired to the Castle of Edinburgh, his son, the Duke of Rothsay, being still in the Castle of Stirling, under the government of Shaw of Sauchie.

Nothing could be more unfortunate for the affairs of James than this ill-timed lenity, which proceeded from his timidity, and his averseness to shed blood. As in religious disputes, decision is the only course with frantic sectaries, who generally care little for the lenity which tolerates, and must therefore be opposed by the resolution which expels, so, in political insurrections, the strong and salutary arm of power ought always to be exercised, and the faction crushed, ere it strengthens that spirit which, when excited, proceeds to the most daring extremes. It is asserted by all our historians, that this timidity was fatal to James, and that by it he lost an opportunity which could never be recalled. It was not likely that the discontentment would be allayed by any concessions; for concessions to insurgents are in reality virtual acknowledgments that their conduct is praisewor-

path, in his *Border History*, suspects that the Bishop of Glasgow (Blackadder), and the Bishop of Dunkeld (Brown), favoured the insurgents, as they were connected with families attached to the Homes and Hepburns. The articles chiefly relate to the young prince; and it certainly does appear from them, that they had then got possession of his person. The last article is to this effect: "At al discentions and discordis, now standand or beand betuex any lordis or gret baronis, of baith the pertis, sal be drawn be the wisdom of the said lordis to unite concord, so that luff and favour may stand ymanges oure Soverane Lordis leegis."

thy, and must only increase the insolence of their partisans. James ought at Blackness to have put down this dangerous association, ere its members dispersed with their prejudices inveterate, their resolutions the same to expel the sovereign, and increasing in strength during the brief cessation of hostilities, more especially as he was then supported by many powerful chiefs, particularly Huntly, Errol, Glammis, and Marischal, who afterwards deserted the royal cause, and joined the insurgents.

But the misfortunes of his house attended James in his series of disasters. He was indeed sensible of the advantages which public clamour gave to his enemies ; and had he possessed due discrimination, he might have ruined their cause. He was still suspected, and the insurgents at length insisted on his abdication of the throne. It is unfortunate that the terms of the negociation are only partially recorded, and that we have no other document than that entitled, " The Pacification of Blackness," which almost exclusively relates to the guidance of the young prince, with only one article, that the King's " maist noble person be at all tymes in honor, securitie, and fredome." But the demands of the rebels being exorbitant, inasmuch as they completely controlled the King in his administration, James had evaded or delayed their accomplishment. The rebels, on the other hand, insisted that the King had not fulfilled his terms of the treaty, and, whatever the terms were, it is certain they had some occasion for complaint, more especially when we consider that the peers already mentioned deserted him on that very account : And in an act of parliament framed after

the King's death, and entitled, "The proposition of the debate of the field of Stirling," the non-fulfilment of the terms on the part of the King is expressly assigned by those peers as the cause of their defection. The error of James consisted in agreeing to any conditions which were exorbitant, and when he was able to defeat his enemies; but he was certainly bound afterwards to fulfil them, and hence it was that the confederacy daily spread wider, till all the country south of the Grampians was in a state of revolt.

The conduct of James, too, at this juncture, was not likely to effect a reconciliation, and must necessarily have excited the suspicions of the insurgents for their own personal safety. He had retired to the Castle of Edinburgh, where was all his treasure, and he proceeded to strengthen it with considerable activity. In the meantime, being aware of the practices of the insurgents, he applied to the kings of England and France, and to the Pope, Eugenius VIII. for their interference; and the application was successful. This was most certain to rouse the fears of the confederates. The two monarchs threatened to raise armies for the aid of the Scottish King, and his Holiness appointed Adrian de Castello as his nuncio, at that time his Legate in England, and, according to Buchanan, a man of great learning, to effect a reconciliation, and even to excommunicate the insurgents, should they prove refractory. But those resources were too late, and the nuncio arrived when his interposition was in vain.

Those proceedings of the King were viewed with alarm by the conspirators, who were beginning to find, that, notwithstanding the promising aspect of

their affairs, they were not secure. They now saw that decision and activity were their only resources. It was not their interest to delay so long as to bring against themselves the armies of France and England, and they wished especially to anticipate the Nuncio's arrival, whose influence they dreaded most of all, because, were their practices to be denounced by the Church, it would have drawn from them a considerable number of adherents, through the fear of ecclesiastical censures. They, therefore, at once appeared in arms, and openly insisted on the King's resignation of the crown.

Sensible, however, that their affairs must languish, and their adherents dwindle, unless they were furnished with new pretexts for rebellion, and were headed by a person of authority, they had recourse to bold and daring proceedings. The Earl of Angus proposed that the Duke of Rothsay, the King's eldest son, should be placed at their head, and his proposal met with the most cheerful acquiescence. By involving him in their conspiracy, they in a manner secured themselves; for, should they be successful, their safety was evident; if unsuccessful, prudential reasons would restrain the King from inflicting on them summary punishment. They now gave out that the King had a design on his son's life, which, in the state of popular feeling, was readily believed. The young prince had been consigned to the care of Shaw of Sauchie, governor of Stirling Castle, with strict orders from the King, that no one who was disaffected should be allowed to approach him, and that he should on no account be suffered to go out of the Castle. But that treacherous governor

disregarded his sovereign's injunctions. He secretly favoured the conspirators, and he was prevailed upon, by the present of a considerable sum of money, to deliver the young prince into their hands, the defence of whose life, it was maintained, called them to arms, and whose name, thus associated with the confederates, sanctioned their designs. The youth was accordingly conducted to Linlithgow, unconscious of their ultimate intentions, and Scotland was thus to behold a son constrained to league against his father and sovereign. With the money which they had found at Leith in the King's baggage the confederates contrived to supply themselves with warlike stores; and having obtained possession of the prince, whose name was now employed to sanction all their actions, they took the field with their retainers.

James, ignorant of this infamous conduct on the part of Shaw, seeing no other resource but war, again summoned the northern chiefs to attend his standard. The place of rendezvous is not mentioned, but it was probably at or near Stirling, whither the King intended to proceed, to join those chiefs who were advancing from the north with their followers. The rebels in the meantime were assembling their forces in the same direction. By a fatality which seems to have attended him, James left the Castle of Edinburgh for Stirling, trusting to the fidelity of its governor, as it was also a fortress where he could be secure. This was another misfortune. His affairs were not then so desperate, and had he kept himself in Edinburgh Castle until the result of his applications to France and England was known, and until the arrival of the Papal Nuncio, he would still have been able



to defeat the confederacy. He was in possession of the Castle of Blackness; his Admiral, Sir Andrew Wood, commanded the river Forth; and his friends in the north were still numerous and powerful. But unconscious of Shaw's treachery, and believing, perhaps, that the Castle of Stirling was of more importance than that of Edinburgh, inasmuch as it commanded the only bridge over the Forth, and the great entrance into the Highlands, whence his northern subjects were to advance, he left the metropolis. All that the conspirators wanted was to draw the King into the field.

James proceeded to Stirling by Blackness, where he was joined by the Earls of Montrose and Glencairn, (who had been recently elevated to that earldom from the title of Lord Kilmaurs), the Lords Maxwell and Ruthven. As some of the chiefs had joined the insurgents, and as the junction of the northern clans with the King's troops had caused a considerable delay, a second negotiation was proposed, but without effect. The rebels, in order to induce the King to take the field, made a show of dismissing their army, while they were secretly mustering their forces for a decisive engagement. The King, in the meantime, arrived at Stirling, where he found a considerable number of the northern clans assembled. Advancing to the Castle, he was astonished when he was not only refused admittance, but found the gates shut, and the guns pointed against his person. He inquired for his son, and the perfidious governor at first said, that he could not be seen at that time. He soon learned, with astonishment, that he was with the rebels; and on upbraiding Shaw with his perfidy, he pretended that the prince had been



carried off by the conspirators against his inclination. But the King perceived the treachery. "Fy, traitor!" said he, "thou hast deceived me; but if I live, I shall be revenged on thee, and reward thee as thou deservest."

In this extremity, and, according to some writers, after crossing and recrossing the Forth, and making another attempt to gain admittance into the Castle, James lay that night in the town of Stirling, where he was speedily joined by all his army. While deliberating on the measures he should adopt, intelligence was brought him that the conspirators were then at Falkirk, and were advancing with their forces to Torwood,—a place famous in Scottish story as the retreat of the patriot Wallace, and at that time a forest of considerable extent. The King was now in a peculiar situation; the Castle of Stirling was held out against him, the only place where he could have been secure; and the army of the conspirators, by thus advancing in the direction of Torwood, could easily intercept him in any attempt to reach Edinburgh. Sir Andrew Wood, his admiral, had indeed sailed up the Forth as far as Alloa,—a town only seven miles from Stirling over land, but more than double that distance by water, on account of the serpentine turnings and windings of the river, in that delightful carse or valley through which the Forth runs towards the ocean; and that famous mariner would have sailed farther up the river, had there been sufficient depth of water for his vessels. The King could easily have retreated from Stirling by embarking in the Admiral's fleet, but this would most probably have been attended with danger; and as it would have been interpret-

ed by the insurgents as the result of timidity and cowardice, it would have increased their boldness, and done material injury to the royal cause. Situated as James was, he had no other alternative than either to embark in Wood's vessels, or to decide the contest by a battle; and, after calling a council of the chiefs who followed the royal standard, he resolved to hazard the latter.

It was in the month of June, and the forests of Stirlingshire were clothed in their summer foliage, when this unnatural and fatal contest was decided. The ground is sacred in the annals of Scottish song. Different, indeed, were the motives which stimulated this array of Scotland's chivalry, from those which prompted their illustrious ancestors under the banners of Bruce. The insurgents, who soon understood the purposes of the King, prepared also for battle, and passed the Carron, a small but remarkable rivulet in Stirlingshire, which rises in the parish of Fintry, almost in the centre of the isthmus between the Forth and Clyde, and falls into the Forth, a few miles below Falkirk. The associations connected with this brook are interesting in no ordinary degree. It was the boundary of the Roman empire, when that empire was in its glory, the famous wall of Antoninus running parallel to it for some miles. On its banks was the Roman structure called Arthur's Oven; and there was fought a famous battle between the Romans, and the Scots and Picts, in the fifth century. On its banks were performed the exploits of Ossian, the son of Fingal. Oscar, the son of Ossian, there signalized himself as a hero; and the vale is yet pointed out by tradition, where those ancient warriors contended with

the heroes of the streams of Caros. There, with more certainty of truth, was fought the well known battle between Wallace and the English invaders, which succeeded the memorable interview between that patriot and Robert Bruce, disastrous to the Scottish arms. It is long, however, since the silvery stream of the Carron rolled along amid the din of arms; happy it is that the busy scenes of trade and the mechanical arts now distinguish its classic banks.

The insurgents had encamped at the bridge over the Carron, near the Torwood, when the King led his army against them, and encamped at a small brook named Sauchie Burn, about two miles from the town of Stirling, and a mile south from the famous field of Bannockburn. If Lindsay of Pitscottie is to be credited, on the night before the battle, another attempt was made for a negotiation, which was also unsuccessful. The two armies met on a tract of land now termed Little Canglar, on the east side of Sauchie Burn. The army of the rebels was greatly superior to that of the King; it consisted chiefly of Borderers inured to war, well armed and well disciplined; and was consequently most unequally opposed by the Lowland royalists. The exact number of the two armies has not been ascertained; the royal army has been estimated by some as containing 30,000 men, that of the insurgents 18,000; but there is every reason to conclude, that the number of the royal army is greatly exaggerated, as it is universally admitted, that the army of the insurgents was greatly superior to the royal forces.

The King, in complete armour, and mounted on the courser presented to him at Perth by Lord

Lindsay of the Byres, appeared at the head of the army, which he divided into three several lines. The first, or vanguard, was commanded by the Earl of Menteith, Lords Erskine, Gray, Ruthven, Graham, and Maxwell, and consisted chiefly of Highlanders to the number of 10,000, armed with swords and bows; the second line, or right wing, was headed by the Earl of Glencairn, and consisted of Highlanders, and troops from the Western counties; the third, the left wing, or rear, in which was the greatest strength of the army, was commanded by the Lords Boyd and Lindsay; and the main body, in which was the King himself, by the Earl of Crawford, all consisting of soldiers from Fife and Angus, Strathearn, and the district of Stormont.

When the King beheld the approach of the rebels, he called for the horse presented to him by Lindsay, and mounted him, to observe the disposition of the rebels. Their army, which consisted chiefly of cavalry, was also divided into three separate lines. The first was composed of men from East-Lothian and the Merse, or Berwickshire, led by Lords Hailes and Home; the second was under the command of Lord Gray, and consisted of men from Galloway and the Borders; the third was under the nominal command of the Duke of Rothsay, though he was completely under the controul of the rebel Lords who belonged to this division, and consisted of men from West-Lothian, and other midland Lowland counties. The rebels advanced with great boldness, presuming too well on the King's timidity, and want of military experience. As for James himself, when he perceived the insurgents advancing with the

royal banner displayed, and his own son at their head, he felt no inconsiderable alarm. The prophecy which had formerly preyed upon his mind, "that he should be put down, and destroyed by one of his own kindred," now recurred, and, it is more than probable, influenced his subsequent conduct.

The leaders of the royal army, fearing that the King's timidity would prove fatal, and also desirous of his safety, wished to remove him from the lines, but by that time the action had commenced. A dense shower of arrows from the West-Lothian men, and a keen attack from the Homes and Hepburns, denoted the opening of the contest; but they were successfully opposed by the first line of the royal army, and were beaten back with considerable loss. They were, however, instantly supported by the men of Annandale and the Borderers, who, with loud shouts, drove the King's first and second lines back to the third. This advantage was decisive, though it is not accurately known how long the battle continued, or how many fell. Victory declared for the rebels, and the King's army experienced a total rout. Glencairn, Ruthven, Erskine, Ramsay of Balmain, and other leaders of the royal army, were slain, and many were wounded. Such was the result of the lamentable disaster at Sauchie Burn, which was fought on the 11th day of June 1488, the day of the Festival of St Barnabas.

The King, whose courage had never been remarkable, now put spurs to his steed and fled. It was his endeavour to gallop across the carse or vale of Stirling to Alloa, where Wood's fleet lay at anchor, the distance being only five miles from the field of battle. As he was on the point of

crossing the rivulet of Bannockburn, near the village of Milltown, a mile eastward of the field, a woman happened to be drawing water with a pitcher from the stream. Alarmed at seeing a man in armour galloping furiously towards her, she threw down her pitcher, and fled for safety. The noise startled the horse, and, leaping over the rivulet at one spring, threw his inexperienced rider from the saddle. The King, from his fall, was so stunned and bruised by the weight of his armour, that he fainted away, and seemed to all appearance dead. The accident happened within a few yards of a mill, and the miller and his wife came running in haste to the aid of the unfortunate horseman. Ignorant of his rank, they carried him into their house, and laid him in a corner, covering him with a cloth to conceal him from any pursuer. Having administered to him what remedies their house afforded, James recovered, and, feeling himself weak and greatly bruised, he called for a priest to hear his confession. The rustics inquired the name and quality of their guest, when James incautiously said, "I was your king this morning." The miller's wife, overcome with astonishment, wrung her hands, and ran hastily to the door in alarm to search for a priest, as the King desired, to grant him absolution.

The fate of the unfortunate monarch was decided by this incautious disclosure of his name and rank. A general rout had followed the battle, and the royal army fled in all directions, pursued by the victorious confederates. It had been the express desire of the Duke of Rothsay, when he perceived the rout of the royal army, that none should presume to pursue his father, or attempt to



intercept his flight; but this, of course, was little regarded by the victorious conspirators. It happened, that at the very moment the miller's wife came out of the house exclaiming for a priest, some of the rebels who were following the rout which the King took in his flight, passed the house. According to Buchanan, though the statement wants proof, there were three who pursued the King very closely, Patrick Gray, the chief of that family, Kerr, and a priest named Borthwick. The pursuers, whoever they were, thus having discovered the object of their search, failed not to improve the opportunity. One of them exclaimed to the woman, "Here, I am a priest, lead me to the King." He was accordingly admitted, and falling on his knees before James, asked him, if he thought he would yet live. "I might," replied the King, "if I had the attendance of a physician; but give me absolution and the sacrament."—"That I shall do readily," said the villain; and pulling out a dagger, stabbed the unfortunate monarch repeatedly in the heart, and then departed; nor was the perpetrator of this atrocious act ever afterwards discovered.

Beaton's Mill, said to be so called from a person of that name who then possessed it, the place where this villany was committed, is still to be seen, but is now converted into a dwelling-house. The lower parts of the walls are those which were erected at the time, the upper parts are of more recent date. Mr Chambers, in his admirable work, the "Picture of Scotland," informs us, that "he had the curiosity to visit it, and to inquire into the traditionary account of the circumstance above related, as preserved by the people



of the place, which he was surprised to hear tallied in every particular with the historical narrative. He was even shown the particular corner in which the King was slain. The house has been somewhat modernized, and converted from a mill into a dwelling-house. The lower part of the walls, however, are, to about a man's height, unaltered, and impressed with the appearance of great antiquity. A corner stone of the modern part of the fabric bears date 1667. The house is divided into two *ends*, with separate doors, accommodating two families, and is thatched. It stands about fifty yards east of the road from Glasgow to Stirling, in the close neighbourhood of the new mill which had been substituted, when it was converted into a dwelling-house."

Some of the King's forces had retreated to the Torwood, and others to the town of Stirling. The conspirators betook themselves to Linlithgow, after resting all the night succeeding the battle in the field. The fate of the King was not then known, but in a short time rumours soon spread over the country of the assassination, aided by an additional report, that Rothsay was the murderer of his own father. The young prince, now King, was inconsolable when he heard of his father's death, yet, as it had not become public, he was not without hope. It was some days before he received certain information, for if any of the conspirators knew it, they carefully concealed it from him. In the mean time, a person who came to Linlithgow, informed them that Admiral Wood's two vessels were traversing up and down the Frith, and it was still believed that the King had reached the fleet in safety. The rebel army forthwith proceeded to

Leith, whence a message was sent from the young prince to Wood, desiring to know if the King was on board any of his vessels. Wood informed them that he was not, and gave them permission to search his ships. A second message was sent to him, desiring an interview ; but Wood refused to go on shore without hostages for his safety. These being delivered in the persons of Lords Seton and Fleming, who were sent on board the Admiral's vessels in the custody of his brother, Wood proceeded to Leith, and presented himself before the prince. Mistaking the Admiral, from his noble appearance, for his father, whom it would appear he had seldom seen, no sooner did he see him, than he exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, " Sir, are you my father ? "—" I am not your father," replied Wood, " but I was your father's faithful servant, and shall be so till I die, and an enemy to those who have been the occasion of his downfall." Some of the nobles who had been in the conspiracy, asked him, if he knew any thing of the King, or where he was ; to which he replied, that he knew not. They then asked him who the persons were that put off from the field at Alloa, and went on board his vessels in boats. " I and my brother," replied Wood, " who were ready to have risked our lives in defence of the King." They still asked him, if he really was not in the vessel, and Wood boldly said, " He is not ; but would to God he were there, for he would be in safety. I would defend and keep him free from all the vile traitors who have cruelly murdered him, and I hope to see the day when they will be rewarded as they deserve." As this answer of Wood was not very agreeable to the persons present, it is probable that

he would never have returned to his vessels alive, had there been no hostages for his security. And indeed, as his absence was longer than was expected, his brother was becoming impatient, and would have executed the two hostages without ceremony, as they testified at their return, had the Admiral been delayed any longer. \* At last the body of the unfortunate James was discovered, and carried to Stirling Castle, where it lay till it was interred in the Abbey of Cambuskenneth, beside the body of his late Queen. The spot is still shown, though there is no monument. So sincerely did the young prince, afterwards James IV., repent of his proceedings against his father, that the keenest remorse preyed upon his mind. "Residing for some time," says an historian, "in the Castle of Stirling, the priests of the chapel-royal deplored in his presence, and even in their prayers, the death of their founder; and the solemnity of religion increased the mental gloom of his son, who resolved, with amiable superstition, to wear constantly in penance an iron girdle, the weight of which he increased with his years. The Roman Pontiff spared the youth and innocence of James, but darted the thunder of the Vatican at the rebellious barons, whose arms had been pointed against their sovereign." James himself, however, as he acceded to the crown amid

\* Mr Pinkerton observes, that this passage, taken from Lindsay of Pitscottie's History, "can have no claim to truth, James being sixteen years of age, and knowing his father perfectly." This, however, does not follow; for it is certain that he had not seen his father for some time; and as it was believed that he was in Wood's fleet, he might have mistaken at first sight the Admiral, who, in years and appearance, if tradition be correct, resembled James III.

rebellion and misfortune, was not free from the calamities of his House; and the fatal disaster of Flodden deprived Scotland once more of a sovereign, who fell in the field of battle with the flower of Scottish chivalry.

It may be observed, in conclusion, that no executions followed this unnatural rebellion. In the first Parliament of James IV, a remarkable act was passed, entitled, "The proposition of the debate of the field of Stirling," which secured the conspirators, and justified their successful rebellion, by enumerating various pretended accusations against the late King. So completely did the conspirators gain upon the King by the force of flattery, that he caused all the peers to be summoned who had been leaders in the royal army, to the number of twenty-eight. The most remarkable of these trials was that of Lord Lindsay of the Byres, who was put first on the list. It ended, after a considerable altercation, and some rough and energetic replies from Lindsay, in his acquittal, on account of some imperfection in the indictment. He was ordered to enter his recognisances that he would appear on a certain day. He was, however, soon afterwards sent a prisoner, by the command of the King, to the Castle of Rothsay, in the Island of Bute, where he remained a whole year. The superior talents and administration of James IV. relieved the nation from its former distractions. His character was brightened by many illustrious qualities; the spirit of Scottish chivalry revived; and a reign of considerable glory in the Scottish annals ensued, till the dark cloud of misfortune again appeared after the melancholy disaster of Flodden.

# III.

---

THE

CONSPIRACY

OF

JOHN LEWIS FIESCO,

COUNT OF LAVAGNA,

AGAINST

GENOA,

A.D. 1547.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE CARDINAL DE RETZ,  
BY PETER DAVALL, OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE,  
BARRISTER AT LAW.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

---

THE following account of the remarkable conspiracy of Count Fiesco at Genoa is reprinted from the narrative of the celebrated Cardinal De Retz, who flourished in the 17th century. John Francis Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz, one of the most remarkable political characters in French history, was the son of Philip Emanuel de Gondi, General of the Galleys, and descended from a Florentine family. He was born at Montmirel, a town in France, in 1614. He was compelled by his father to enter the Church against his inclination, and had several abbacies conferred upon him when yet in his youth. In 1643, he became a Doctor of the Sorbonne, and coadjutor to his uncle who was Archbishop of Paris. But, although an ecclesiastic, nothing could be at greater variance with his profession than the life of this extraordinary man. In his Memoirs, written by himself, and perhaps one of the most remarkable works translated into our language, though now almost forgotten, he has most graphically portrayed his transactions. "These Memoirs," says Voltaire, "are written with an air



of greatness, an impetuosity of genius, and an inequality, which are the image of his conduct. He composed these in his retirement with the impartiality of a philosopher, but of one who had not always been a philosopher. He neither spares himself nor others. He gives portraits of all those who acted a considerable part in the intrigues of the Fronde, which are often very natural, but sometimes spoilt by a remnant of acrimony, vanity, and enthusiasm." \* He was a man who, notwithstanding his life of debauchery, and while labouring under its consequences, preached to the people, and was almost adored by them. His whole conduct partook of the spirit of faction and sedition. He fought duels, entered into every species of licentiousness, and at the age of twenty-three was himself the very soul of a conspiracy against Cardinal Richelieu. It was, however, during the ministry of the famous Cardinal Mazarine, who both hated and feared him, that he was in his element. By pretending great devotion in the discharge of his episcopal duties, he imposed upon the people, and became popular by his professions of zeal of the public welfare. It is said that he was the first bishop who carried on a war without the pretence of religion; and, as he was one of the most violent opposers of the Court, he once entered the French Parliament with a dagger

\* Siecle de Louis XIV.

in his pocket, the handle of which being observed by a wit, called forth the remark. "There is our Archbishop's Breviary." It is impossible to give even a rude outline of the tumultuous, daring, and intriguing life of this remarkable man. On coalescing with the Court, he procured a Cardinal's Hat in 1651, but, as he was esteemed a deserter by his party, he soon lost his popularity. He was imprisoned in the Castles of Vincennes and Nantz, whence he made his escape, and fled first to Spain, and afterwards to Rome, where he was received with great favour as the enemy of Mazarine. He was present, and assisted at the elevation of Alexander VII. to the Pontificate; but, finding his Holiness not much disposed to promote his views, he left Italy, and wandered throughout Holland, Flanders, and England. He was at this time Archbishop of Paris, having succeeded his uncle in the sole government of that See. Weary, however, of his wanderings and exile, he returned to France after the death of Mazarine, in 1661, and made his peace with the Court by vacating his Archbishopric, as a recompense for which he received the Abbacy of St Denis. He was afterwards at Rome, and assisted at the consecration of Clement IX. He returned his Cardinal's Hat to Clement X, but that Pontiff refused to accept it. He now retired from the world, was enabled to discharge all his debts, which,

from his life of profusion, were considerable, and died at Paris in 1679, in the 66th year of his age, regretted by men of worth and integrity. His conduct towards the close of his career, was different from that of his former life ; but it has been often asserted, and perhaps with truth, that “ he did not quit the world till it had quitted him, and that disappointed ambition, rather than elevation, was the motive of his retreat.”

It was in the retirement of St Denis that De Retz wrote his Memoirs. The best French editions are those of Amsterdam, 1718, in five volumes octavo ; 1719, in seven vols. 12mo ; and of 1731, four vols. small 8vo. They were translated into English by Peter Davall, of the Middle Temple, a barrister, afterwards a Master in Chancery, and, at the time of his death in 1763, Accomptant-General of that Court. They were published at London in 1723, in four vols. 12mo, by the famous bookseller Jacob Tonson, dedicated to Congreve the poet, who encouraged Davall's publication. The Memoirs were also published in 1774, in three vols. 12mo. It is, however, from Tonson's edition of 1723, translated by Davall, that the following narrative is taken, as the name of that eminent bibliopole is a sufficient guarantee for its faithfulness. I must also add, that having compared Davall's translation of this conspiracy with the original written by the Cardinal, and published at Amsterdam, I have

found it substantially correct, and it has been therefore thought necessary to preserve Davall's translation, with merely some slight alterations in the orthography and structure of a few of the sentences. This account of the conspiracy of Fiesco by the Cardinal de Retz, is inserted among some other pieces, now also forgotten, in the fourth volume of Tonson's edition translated by Davall.

It is needless to say any thing here respecting the conspiracy of Fiesco, which is one of the most remarkable and daring adventures recorded in history. There is another account of it, in a rare volume of historical tracts, entitled "A Collection of Select Discourses out of the most Eminent Wits of France and Italy," 8vo, London, 1678; but it appears to be a translation, and a very inferior one, of the Cardinal's narrative, from Signior Mascardi, but the translator's name is not given. It is, however, noticed occasionally in the notes. Dr Robertson has given a very graphic though confused account of this famous conspiracy, in his History of Charles V, and he has made considerable use of De Retz's narrative. This performance by the Cardinal, it may be observed in conclusion, was written when he was only eighteen years of age, and may be considered as characteristic of his disposition, and of his turbulent conduct in after life. It is partly translated from the Italian of Mascardi, and was entitled "La Conjuration du Comte de Fiesque,

par Cardin. de Retz." The Cardinal, of course, professes great admiration of Fiesco. "It is remarkable," says Dr Robertson in a note, "that Cardinal de Retz, at the age of eighteen, composed a history of this conspiracy, containing such a discovery of his admiration of Fiesco and his enterprise, as renders it not surprising, that a minister so jealous as Richelieu, should be led, by the perusal of it, to predict the turbulent and dangerous spirit of that young ecclesiastic."

THE  
CONSPIRACY  
OF  
JOHN LEWIS FIESCO,  
AGAINST  
G E N O A.

---

But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honourable man.

*Julius Cæsar.*

IN the beginning of the year 1547, the republic of Genoa was in a condition which might have been called happy had it been better secured. To all appearance it enjoyed a glorious tranquillity, acquired by its own arms, and preserved by those of the great Charles V, whom that state had chosen for the protector of its liberty. The weakness of its enemies sheltered it from their ambition, and the charms of peace restored a prosperity, which the disorders of war had long banished. Trade began to revive in the city, to the visible

advantage of the public and of private persons ; and if the minds of the citizens had been as free from jealousy, as their fortunes were from necessity, that commonwealth had soon recovered from its past miseries, by a state of ease, wealth and happiness. But the want of union amongst them, and the seeds of hatred which the late divisions had left in the hearts of the people, were dangerous remains, which plainly indicated, that the great body was not yet cured of its distempers, and that its seeming health was like that of those persons, whose bloated faces carry with them a good appearance, but conceal many ill humours. The nobility, who had the government in their hands, could not forget the injuries which they had received from the people, during the time that they had no share in the management of affairs ; and the people, on their part, could not suffer the dominion of the nobility, but viewed it as a new tyranny, contrary to the ordinances of the state. Some, even amongst the noblemen, who aspired to a higher fortune, secretly envied the grandeur of the rest. Thus the one commanded with haughtiness, and the others obeyed with indignation, and many thought themselves servants because they did not act enough like masters ; when Providence permitted an accident to happen, which made these different sentiments break out on a sudden, and which finally confirmed the one in their command, and the others in their slavery. This was the conspiracy of John Lewis de Fiesco, Count de Lavagna, which we must trace a little higher, the better to understand the circumstances of the events that followed.

At the time of those famous wars in which the Emperor Charles V. and Francis I. King of France,



laid Italy waste, Andrew Doria, born of one of the best families in Genoa, and the greatest seaman at that day in Europe, followed the French party with much zeal, and maintained the grandeur and reputation of that crown at sea with such courage and good fortune, as tended no less to the advantage of those whose interests he promoted, than to his own glory. But it is a misfortune common to great princes not to regard sufficiently those who can do them service, when once they think themselves assured of their loyalty. From this cause proceeded the loss which France suffered of so good a servant ; and that loss produced effects so fatal, that the remembrance of them will ever be grievous and deplorable to that kingdom. Whilst this great man was engaged upon advantageous terms in the King's service abroad, as general of his galleys, those who were first in favour and power at home began to envy both his glory and his office, and formed the design of undoing the man whom they saw too great ever to submit to be a dependant on any one but his master. As they judged it at first neither safe nor useful to their design to do him ill offices with the King, who had lately expressed too good an opinion of him, so soon to conceive an ill one ; they took a more subtile method, and, joining their praises to the public applause, which was given to Doria's first taking up arms for France, they resolved, by degrees, to give him such occasions of discontent, as might seem rather to proceed from the general necessity of affairs than from their private malice, and which, nevertheless, would work the desired effect. They

sought the means of giving his proud and haughty mind room to display itself, that they might the better ruin him in the King's good opinion ; and the business which his employment obliged him to have before the council, furnished those who were in full authority there with too many occasions of disobliging him. One time the exchequer was too low to pay his large salary ; another time it was assigned him upon insufficient funds ; sometimes his demands were reckoned unjust and exorbitant. At length, his remonstrances on the wrongs done him were so criminally represented to the King by the artifices of his enemies, that he began to be importunate and troublesome, and, by little and little, came to be accounted by his Majesty a man of an interested, insolent, and turbulent spirit. He was at last openly disobliged, by being refused the ransom of the Prince of Orange, whom his nephew Philippino Doria had taken prisoner before Naples, and whom the King had caused to be put into other hands. They demanded from him, even with threats, the Marquis de Guasto and Ascanio Colonna, taken prisoners at the same battle. They talked no longer of keeping the promise which they had made him, to restore Savona to the republic of Genoa : And as his enemies observed him to take fire, instead of concealing the reasons he had to complain, under an appearance of moderation, they left nothing undone to increase them. Monsieur de Barbezieux was ordered to take possession of his galleys, and even to secure his person if it were possible. This fault was no less contrary to prudence than to good faith ; and the ministers of France cannot be sufficiently blamed for having

preferred their private interest to their master's service, and taken away from him the only man who could have maintained his party in Italy. And since they were resolved to ruin Doria, we may venture to say that they were bad politicians not to have done it thoroughly, but to have left him in a condition wherein he was capable of doing a great deal of hurt, not only to France in general, but to themselves in particular, by the vexation and disgust which the King might take at their counsels, and by the ill consequences which they had brought upon his kingdom.

Doria, finding himself thus insultingly treated, published a manifesto of his complaints, protesting that they did not so much proceed from his private interests, as from the injustice with which Savona had been refused to be restored to his country, though so often promised by the French King. He treats with the Marquis de Guasto, his prisoner, declares for the Emperor, and accepts of the command of his fleet. The conduct of this old politician was in this, at least, as malicious as that of the French ministers, but much more cunning and judicious. He cannot be excused from an extreme ingratitude, in suffering himself to be hurried away by his passion to such a dangerous revenge against a prince, to whom he may be said to have been obliged for all his honour, since he had gained the most glorious marks of it in the command of his armies ; and he can hardly be excused from a base piece of treachery, unworthy his former actions, in ordering his lieutenant, Philip-pino Doria, to suffer provisions to come into Naples, which was then extremely distressed by De Lautrec, at the time that he still protested that he

would continue in the King's service. But it must also be owned, that, for this way of acting he ought to pass for a very able man in relation to political interest, for he so artfully threw the appearances on his side, that his friends could say that the breach of promise which he complained of for his country, was the true cause of his change; and that his enemies could not deny but that he was compelled to it by such usage as was too severe and too hard to endure. Besides, he was not ignorant that the means of being greatly considered in a party is, to let the first coming into it be accompanied with great advantages. And indeed, he contrived his revolt so well, and managed it with so much conduct, that he preserved Naples to the Emperor, which, in a few days, would have been taken from him by the French, if Philippino Doria had continued faithful in their service. By this change France lost one of the greatest generals that ever the kingdom produced,\* and at last placed the commonwealth of Genoa under the protection of the crown of Spain, to whom it is advantageous on account of its contiguity to the Spanish dominions in Italy. This was the first of Andrew Doria's actions for the Emperor's service, after he had openly declared himself against the French King.

This skilful and ambitious man, acquainted as he was with the intrigues of Genoa and the inclinations of the Genoese, did not fail to manage the minds of that people, who have always been accused of a natural love for novelty. As he had

\* Odet de Foix, Sieur de Lautres and Mareschal of France, who died before Naples in the year 1528.

in the city many friends and secret favourers, who took care to give him intelligence of all that passed there, he took care, on his side, to confirm the one in the discontent which they expressed against the present government, and to use his endeavours to raise a like discontent in the others ;—to persuade the people that the French left them only the name of sovereigns, whilst they themselves kept all the power ;—to set before the nobility the image of the ancient government which had always been in their hands ;—and, lastly, to inspire every one with the hopes of a general re-establishment of affairs, by a revolution.

Having formed his party, he came near to Genoa with his galleys, landed his troops, and ranged them in order of battle, without meeting with any resistance. He entered the city, followed by those of his friends who had taken up arms at the appointed signal. He possessed himself of the principal posts, of which he made himself master, almost without drawing his sword. Theodore Trivulcius, who commanded there for the King of France, lost with Genoa all the reputation which he had gained in the Italian wars, by neglecting to frustrate the measures which were concerted there, though he had notice given him of them ; and because, to save his life and his money, he preferred the making a shameful composition in the Castle, to the burying himself honourably in the ruins of that place which was of such importance to his master's service.

No sooner were the French driven out of Genoa, than the name of Doria was heard to echo through the streets ; one side, in these acclama-

tions, following their true sentiments ; the other, by their dissembled shouts, endeavouring to conceal the opinion which they had expressed on divers occasions, that their thoughts were not agreeable to the public joy ; and the greatest part rejoiced at these things (as it is common with the vulgar), for no other reason than because they were new.

Doria did not suffer this zeal to subside. He assembled the nobility, he put the government into their hands, and, protesting that he claimed no share in it but what should be common to him and the rest of the noblemen, he gave a form to the commonwealth ; and having received all imaginable testimonies of the obligations which his fellow-citizens had to him, he retired to his palace to enjoy at ease the fruits of his past labours ; and the commonwealth erected a statue for him, with the title of FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, AND RESTORER OF LIBERTY.

Many people are of opinion, that Doria had fully satisfied his ambition in thus restoring liberty to his country, and that the general applause which he received from his countrymen, rather inspired him with the thought of enjoying that glory in quiet, than that of making use of it for higher purposes. Others cannot imagine, that the great employment which he had recently accepted in the Emperor's service, and the continual care he had taken to keep the nobility of Genoa attached to his house, could proceed from a quiet and entirely disinterested mind. They think that he was too able a man, not to see that a sovereign in Genoa could not be pleasing to the Spanish Council, and that he intended only to amuse them by an



appearance of moderation, and to defer, to a more favourable opportunity, his more exalted enterprises.

His old age might, however, have justly diminished the fear they had of his authority, if they had not perceived a power almost equal to his own lodged in a second self. \* Giannettino Doria, his cousin and adopted son, aged about twenty-eight, was extremely vain, haughty, and insolent; he had the survivorship of all his father's posts, and by that means kept the Genoese nobility in his interest. He lived with too much splendour for a citizen who desired to avoid drawing envy on himself, and giving offence to the commonwealth; and he even showed pretty openly that he disdained that character. The extraordinary height to which that House had attained, produced the great agitation of which we are now about to speak, and may serve as a memorable example to all states, never to suffer within themselves any person so eminent, that his authority may give rise to the design of bringing him down, and to the pretence of undertaking it.

John Lewis de Fiesco, Count de Lavagna, descended from the most ancient and most illustrious family in Genoa; worth above two hundred thousand crowns a year, not above twenty-two years of age, endowed with one of the finest and most elevated minds in the world, ambitious, bold, and enterprising, led the same time in Genoa a life very contrary to his inclinations. As he was passionately fond of glory, which he wanted opportunities of

\* The reader will find the same view of affairs taken by Dr Robertson in the Eighth Book of his History of Charles V.



acquiring, he thought of nothing so much as the means of finding them out : but though the present time afforded him none, he might nevertheless have assured himself that his merit would have opened him a way to that glory he so passionately desired in secret, by serving his country, if the extraordinary power of Giannettino Doria, whom we have just now mentioned, had left him any room to hope for an employment. But as he was too great by his birth, and too much esteemed for his good qualities, not to excite an apprehension in the man who would have had all the reputation and strength of the commonwealth to centre in himself, he foresaw that he could have little chance of success in a place where his rival was almost entirely master ; because it is certain that all persons in the highest posts who take umbrage at others, never think of those who are the occasion of it but with a design of ruining them. Seeing, therefore, that he had every thing to fear from Doria's grandeur, and nothing to hope for his own advantage, he thought himself obliged to prevent, by his ingenuity and courage, the ill consequences of that greatness which was so opposite to that of his own family : not being ignorant that there is never any thing to be expected from those who make themselves feared, but an extreme distrust, and a continual endeavour to keep down those who have any merit, and who are capable of raising themselves.

All these considerations made John Lewis de Fiesco despair of growing great in his country's service, and entertain the design of bringing down the power of the family of the Dorias, before they had acquired a greater strength ; and as the government of Genoa was annexed to that

family, he resolved, with their ruin, to effect a change in that government.

Great rivers never do any harm whilst nothing withstands their course : but the least obstacle makes them rush forward with violence, and a small dam is often the occasion of their drowning those plains which they would otherwise have watered with advantage. Thus we may judge, that if the Count de Fiesco had not found his path to glory blocked up by the authority of the Dorias, he had certainly kept within the bounds of a more moderate conduct, and had usefully employed, for the service of his country, those talents which brought it to the brink of ruin.

These ambitious thoughts were kept up in the Count's mind by many persons who hoped to find their private advantage in the public confusion ; and amongst these, none were more eager in their solicitations than the French, who made him great promises and considerable offers ; first by Cæsar Fregozo and Cagnino Gonzaga, and afterwards by Monsieur du Bellay, who had private conferences with him by means of Peter Luke de Fiesco.

It was the common opinion of that time, that Pope Paul, hoping by the same blow, to ruin Andrew Doria, whom he hated for some private reasons, and to take away from the Emperor, who was already too powerful, a considerable support of his party in Italy, had left nothing undone to feed the Count de Fiesco's ambition, and had raised in him the strongest desire of forming a design upon Genoa.

There is nothing that flatters a man of courage so much, or that stimulates him to hazardous

resolutions, as to see himself courted by persons eminent either by their dignity or their reputation. This mark of their esteem immediately fills him with a great confidence in his own merit, and makes him think himself capable of succeeding in the greatest affairs. The design which the Count had formed must for this reason have appeared both glorious and easy to him, since he saw himself urged to it by the greatest prince in Europe, and by the most able man of his time. The one was Francis I., who ordered Peter Strozzi, \* who was to pass with some troops over the mountains near Genoa, to press (in his majesty's name) the execution of it; and the other was Cardinal Augustine Trivulcius, ambassador of France at the Court of Rome, from whom the Count received all imaginable honours, in the journey which he took to that city, under pretence of diversion, but in reality the better to communicate his design to the Pope, and to learn his sentiments.

That Cardinal, who was in great repute, and who was thought to have much penetration in state affairs, found means to animate the Count, by exciting in him an emulation to which he was but too subject, in setting before his eyes, with all the arts that could rouse his jealousy, the present greatness of Giannetino Doria, and the future greatness of which he began to assure himself by the deep root which his authority began to take; and thus increasing his envy of the one and his fear of the other, he represented to him how unsupportable it is for a man of spirit to live in a commonwealth, where he can find no lawful way of

\* He was made a Mareschal of France in 1554.

raising himself, and where merit and noble birth make hardly any distinction betwixt the most illustrious and the most common persons.

Having thoroughly confirmed Fiesco in his general design, the Cardinal came to particulars, by offering him all possible assistance on the part of France; and he so strongly pressed the Count, whose mind was already inclined to that side, that at last he seemed to accept with the utmost joy the proposal that was made to him, of giving him the pay and the command of six galleys for the King's service, a garrison of two hundred men in Montobio, a company of gens d'armes, and a pension of twelve thousand crowns; desiring time, however, till his return to Genoa, before he gave his final answer. So true it is, that nothing is more difficult in affairs of importance, than to take at once an ultimate resolution, because the numerous considerations which crowd into the mind, and destroy each other, make people think that they never have sufficiently deliberated.

Extraordinary actions may be resembled to thunder, which never produces any violent claps or dangerous effects, but when the exhalations of which it is formed have been long struggling against each other; otherwise, it is only a mass of vapours which yield nothing but a dull sound, which, far from giving us fear, is scarcely to be heard. The same thing may be said of resolutions in great affairs, when they enter suddenly into any one's mind, and are received there with a very weak resistance. This is an infallible sign that they make but slight and transient impressions; which, though these may excite some

trouble, can never be strong enough to produce any considerable effect.

It cannot be reasonably doubted, that John Lewis de Fiesco did not consider maturely, and with great reflection, what he intended to undertake; for on his return to Genoa, though he had a violent desire to execute his design, he nevertheless deliberated a considerable time, about the several means which might conduce to the end which he had proposed to himself. Sometimes the aid of a great king made him incline to throw himself into the hands of the French; sometimes the natural distrust which men are apt to have of foreigners, joined to a certain desire for glory which makes them passionately wish to owe their great actions to none but themselves, inclined him to seek in his own strength for means which might bear some proportion to his elevated thoughts; and perhaps these different agitations had kept his mind longer in suspense, and produced a farther delay, if he had not, at every moment, had some fresh cause of just indignation against the excessive pride of Giannettino Doria, who, carrying his insolence to the pitch of despising every one, treated the Count after his return with such haughtiness, that he could no longer conceal his exasperation, and his detestation of the shameful slavery of all his fellow-citizens.

Politicians have blamed this conduct as injudicious, following in this the general rule of never showing the least sign of anger against those we hate, but at the moment we strike that blow which is to bring them down. But if he wanted prudence on this occasion, it must be owned that it is a fault common to persons of great courage,

whom contempt exasperates too much to give them time to consult their reason and master themselves. This fault, however, has freed him from the imputation cast on him by some historians, that he was one of a dark and dissembling temper, that he was more covetous than ambitious, and more in love with interest than glory. This warmth, I say, which has been observed in his conduct, shows that he was urged to this enterprise by no other motives than an emulation of honour and a generous ambition; since all those who have engaged in the like designs out of a spirit of tyranny, and for other interests than those which tend to a great reputation, have always begun by the most submissive patience and abject cringings.

It is certain that the insolence of Giannettino Doria was carried to an insufferable excess, and that he followed in every particular the wicked maxim, that severity and haughtiness are the most secure methods of reigning, and that it is useless to govern with lenity those who may be kept within the bounds of their duty by their fear and their interest. This conduct so increased the aversion which the Count had against him, that it hastened the resolution which he had taken of undoing him, and gave him an opportunity of making a good use against him of that pride with which Giannettino pretended to keep every body under.

Cardinal Augustine Trivulcius, who knew that on those occasions the minds of young men must not be suffered to cool, sent to him, immediately after his return to Genoa, Nicholas Foderato, a gentleman of Savona, and a relation of the House of Fiesco, to know his resolution.



That gentleman having found him more exasperated than ever, and in the condition which we have represented, got him to sign whatever he pleased, and immediately returned to get the treaty ratified by the French king's ministers who were then at Rome. But before he had gone thirty or forty leagues he was recalled in great haste, the Count having reflected, that he had acted too precipitately, and that he ought not to conclude an affair of that consequence without consulting some of his friends, with whose capacity he was acquainted. He sent for three of them, on whose fidelity he could rely, and whom he very much esteemed for their good qualities; and having, in general, declared to them the resolutions he had taken no longer to bear with the present government of the commonwealth, he begged of them to declare their opinion on this subject.

Vincent Calcagno of Varesa, a zealous servant of the House of Fiesco, and a man of judgment but of a timorous spirit, began his discourse with the liberty to which his long services entitled him, and addressing himself to the Count, he spoke in this manner.

“ I think those who have the misfortune to be engaged in great affairs, are very justly to be pitied, because they are, as it were, on a troubled sea, where they can see no place but what is distinguished by some shipwreck. But it is just that we should redouble our fears, when we see young men whom we love exposed to this danger; since they have not strength enough to go through the fatigues of so toilsome a voyage, nor experience enough to avoid the quicksands, and steer



safely into the harbour. All your servants ought to be sensibly concerned at the enterprises to which your courage prompts you. Give me leave to tell you, that they are above your age, and the state in which you are. You dream of projects which require such a regard in the world, that the reputation of a man of your age, however great it may be, can never attain to it; and you form a design which requires such forces, as one of the greatest kings on earth has never yet been able to set on foot. These thoughts arise in your mind from two errors, which are in some measure inherent to human nature. Men are apt to have too great thoughts of themselves, that is, they act as if whatever their imagination tells them they can do were actually within their power; and they judge with little certainty of other persons, because they judge of them only with regard to themselves, and consider what service those persons are able to do them, and not what they ought to do, or are likely to do for their own interest. The first of these is extremely dangerous, because as no one executes a great enterprise alone, but is obliged to communicate it to many people, it is of the highest importance that they should believe it reasonable and practicable, or otherwise the undertaker will meet but with few friends who are ready to follow his fortune. The second is more common, and no less dangerous; because it often happens that we find the greatest resistance from those very persons of whose assistance we had the greatest expectation. Be careful, therefore, that the great qualities with which nature has endowed you, and which you, perhaps justly, imagine may supply your want of experience, do not lead you

into the first inconveniency ; and consider, that how shining soever those qualities may be, it is hard to imagine that they will procure you, even with those who have the best dispositions for that service, such a share of esteem, as is proportionate to the execution of so difficult and dangerous an undertaking. Consider, besides, that it is not credible that these qualities should so dazzle your enemies, as to prevent their making a proper use against yourself of the pretence of your youth. Take care that the greatness of your birth, and the reputation which your good qualities have acquired you, the abundance of your riches, and the secret intelligence which perhaps you have secured, do not lead you into the second inconveniency, and make you believe that the assistance of those who have promised you, cannot fail you, when you have need of it. Change, therefore, that thought, or if you still preserve it, cease to consider others with respect to yourself, but consider them with respect to themselves ; examine their interest, and think, that that is the most powerful motive of men's actions ; that most of those who esteem and love you, love themselves infinitely better, and fear their own ruin much more than they wish your greatness. In short, consider that those who give you hopes of their assistance are either foreigners, or your own countrymen. The most considerable amongst the first are the French, who cannot undertake to assist you, because they are employed in defending their own country against the armies of the empire and of Spain ; and the Genoese, who are capable of aiding you, will not do it, because fear will make many of them apprehend the dangers which accom-

pany affairs of this nature ; and interest will make the rest afraid of hazarding their quiet and their fortunes. The most part of those that are not influenced by these considerations are persons of so mean a birth, and so little power, that nothing for your advantage is to be hoped for from them. So that Doria's too great power, and the bad state of the times, which give you these thoughts of rebellion, ought to inspire you with patience, since they have so depressed the minds of the Genoese, that they now make a glory of submitting out of gratitude to the authority of Andrew Doria, that liberty which he has restored to them, and which he snatched out of the hands of foreigners, for no other end but to usurp the dominion over them. Do you not perceive that this commonwealth has for a long time had only the image of a free government, and that it can no longer subsist without a master ? Do you not see that the greatest part of the nobility are attached to the interest of the House of Doria, by the employments at sea which that House bestows on them ; and that this family, under the protection of the Empire and of Spain, holds all else in fear ? Do you not perceive, I say, that all the Genoese are buried in a kind of lethargy, and that the bravest do not think it dishonourable to yield to that mighty power, provided they do not adore it ? I do not here pretend to justify the imprudence of the commonwealth, who have suffered the elevation of that house, which they can no longer bear without reproach, nor pull down without danger ; but I dare maintain, that a private man cannot reasonably think of removing by his own power a dis-

tress which has taken so deep a root, and that all which a generous man can do on this occasion is to imitate those wise mariners who, instead of obstinately contending against the wind to make to a harbour, steer out again to sea, and leave themselves to the mercy of the waves and winds. Yield, therefore, to the times, since fortune will have it so, and seek not for remedies where none are to be found but those which are worse than the disease; expect them from Providence, which disposes at its pleasure of the changes of states, and which will never be wanting to this commonwealth. Enjoy peaceably that ease and those advantages to which your birth entitles you, or accept of lawful employments to exercise your valour, which the foreign wars will furnish you with sufficient opportunities of doing. Do not expose the great fortune which you possess, and which would satisfy any one's ambition but yours, to the consequences of a criminal revolt; and imagine, that if Giannettino Doria has conceived any hatred or envy at your merit, you cannot oblige him more than by pursuing your present thoughts; since you will give him an opportunity of concealing his private resentment, under the pretence of the general good, and of ruining you with the authority of the commonwealth, and, in short, that you yourself are working to raise upon your own ruin trophies to his glory and grandeur. The greatest fortunes raised without exertion most commonly fall of themselves; because it seldom happens that those who, with ambition, have the other qualities necessary to raise themselves to eminent stations, are at the same time possessed of qualities necessary for maintaining themselves in them; and when any

one of those whom fortune has thus precipitately raised, reaches the top without stumbling, he must, in the beginning, have met with many difficulties, which have by little and little accustomed him to stand firm in so slippery a place. Cæsar had, in the highest degree, all qualities necessary to a great prince, and yet it is certain, that neither his courtesy, his prudence, his courage, his eloquence, nor his liberality, had ever raised him to the empire of the world, had he not found great difficulties to overcome in the commonwealth of Rome. The pretence which the persecution of Pompey furnished him with,—the reputation which their contests gave him room to acquire,—the advantage he made by the divisions of his fellow-citizens, were the true causes of his power; and, notwithstanding this, you seem desirous of adding to the establishment of the family of Doria the only advantage which was wanting to it; and because their happiness has hitherto cost them too little to be well assured, you seem desirous of settling it on a firm foundation, by endeavours which, being too weak to destroy it, will only serve to justify their undertakings, and establish their authority. But for once I will give into your way of thinking, and suppose that you have happily executed your designs;—imagine, then, the family of the Dorias massacred, all the nobility who follow their interest in fetters; imagine all your enemies overthrown, Spain and the Empire in a condition not to hurt you; flatter yourself already with your triumph in this general calamity: If you can fancy to yourself any comfort in these fatal images of the ruin of the commonwealth, what will you do in the midst of a desolate city, which will look on you

rather as a new tyrant, than as a deliverer? What solid foundations will you find on which to build your new greatness? Can you put any trust in the humour of the people, who, the very moment that they have placed the crown on your head, if you have any such thought, will perhaps conceive the greatest horror against you, and will think of nothing but the means of taking it off again? For, as I have already told you, they can neither enjoy their liberty, nor bear long with the same master. Or, if you put Genoa once again into the possession of foreigners, if by your means the city opens its gates to them, the first time they are ill used by them, you will be considered as the destroyer of your country, and the parricide of the people. Are you not afraid that those who now are the keenest to serve you, may be the first to work your ruin, by their envy at being subjected to you? And even supposing that that consideration should not induce them to it, you cannot be ignorant that those who serve a rebel, imagine they so strongly oblige him, that no reward being sufficient to satisfy them, they most commonly become his enemies. As those who roll down a mountain are dashed to pieces against those very points of rocks which they made use of to get up to the top; so those that fall from an exalted fortune, are almost always ruined by the means which they had employed for their elevation. I am sensible that ambition continually tickles persons of your rank, age, and merit, and that it represents nothing to your eyes but pompous and splendid images of glory and grandeur. But whilst your imagination is presenting you with all the objects of that passion which makes men illustrious, your judgment.



ought to make you behold it as the passion which generally makes them unhappy, and obliges them to quit the most certain advantages for the most uncertain hopes. Consider, that if its just use is the occasion of the greatest virtues, its abuse occasions the greatest crimes. Imagine that it is that passion which of old mingled so many poisons, and sharpened so many poniards against usurpers and tyrants, and that it is that same passion that now urges you on to be the Catiline of Genoa. Flatter not yourself that the design you seem to have to preserve the liberty of the commonwealth, can be otherwise received in the world than as the common pretence of all factious people. And supposing that, in reality, no other motive but your zeal for the public good should induce you to this attempt, you must not hope that any one will do you the justice to believe it; since, in all actions which may indifferently be attributed to virtue or vice, when nothing but the intention of the doer can justify them, men, who can judge only from appearances, seldom make a favourable construction of the most innocent ones. But, in the present enterprise, which way soever you turn your eyes, it is impossible to behold any thing but massacres, plunder, and such dismal objects as the best intentions in the world cannot justify. Learn, therefore, to regulate your ambition; and remember, that the only instance wherein that passion can be justified, is, where you set aside your own interest, and follow only the rules of your duty. There have been many conquerors, who have ravaged states and overthrown kingdoms, who have not possessed that greatness of soul which enables us to look with an indifferent eye on the



most exalted and the lowest condition—on the greatest human happiness and misery, on pleasure and pain, on life and death ; and yet it is this love of true glory, this elevated state of the mind, which renders men truly great, and raises them above the rest of the world. This is the only glory that can render you perfectly happy (even though the dangers which you imagine to yourself surrounded you on all hands), since you cannot acquire any other without disgracing yourself by the greatest of crimes. Embrace, therefore, this glory, as well out of prudence as generosity, since it is more useful, less dangerous, and more honourable.”

The Count was extremely moved with this discourse, because it seemed grounded on solid reasons, and because the confidence he had reposed in the speaker, from his earliest youth, added to its authority. Verrina, who was one of those who were called to this council, a man of an extensive genius, impetuous, naturally inclined to great enterprises, an implacable enemy to the present government, almost ruined by his great expenses, firmly attached to the Count both by interest and inclination, answered what had been said in the following manner :

“ I should wonder that there were a single man in Genoa, capable of the sentiments you have just now heard, were not my wonder lost in the consideration of what the commonwealth suffers. When every body bears oppression with so abject a submission, it is natural for them to hide their complaints, and seek excuses for their weakness. This insensibility is, nevertheless, a sign of the deplorable condition of the state ; and Vincent Cagno has very judiciously touched upon it, as the

symptom that gave the plainest proof of the violence of our distemper. But it seems to me very unreasonable not to reap some advantage from the knowledge we have of our disease, since nature itself instructs us that we are obliged to make use of that knowledge for the application of the necessary remedies. The condition, however, of this commonwealth is not yet so desperate, that all its members are corrupted; and the Count de Fiesco, whom fortune has raised above the rest of his countrymen, in greatness, riches, and birth, carries his thoughts to those heights which the narrow views of the Genoese cannot reach, and rises by his courage above the general corruption. To examine whether a man be born for extraordinary actions, it is not sufficient to consider him with regard to the advantages of nature and fortune, (since there have been many persons possessed of both these advantages, who have, notwithstanding, continued all their days to go on in the common path of life); but we must observe if a man of quality, when he finds himself in unhappy circumstances, and in a country where tyranny begins to take place, preserves still the principles of virtue, and the good qualities which nature has bestowed on him. For if he does not lose them on these occasions, but resists the contagion of those base maxims which infect the rest of the world, and particularly the minds of great people (because tyrants take the greatest pains to corrupt them, as those of whom they are most afraid,) we may then judge, that such a person's reputation will one day equal his merit, and that fortune designs him for something great and wonderful. This being the case, I believe there never was

any one from whom the commonwealth could justly expect such great things as from yourself. You come into the world in times, which afford you hardly any example of courage and generosity but what has been punished, and which present you every day with instances of baseness and cowardice which have been rewarded. Add to this, that you are in a country where the power of the house of Doria keeps the hearts of the nobility oppressed with the most shameful fear, or engaged by the most sordid interest, and yet you are not infected with this general contagion. You maintain the noble sentiments with which your illustrious birth has inspired you, and your mind forms enterprises worthy of your valour. Do not, therefore, neglect these admirable qualities; do not slight the gifts of nature; serve your country; judge by the excellence of your inclinations of the great actions they may produce; consider that there is alone wanting a man of your condition and merit to restore the spirit of the Genoese, and inflame them with their first love of liberty. Persuade yourself that tyranny is the greatest evil that can befall a commonwealth. The condition in which ours is now, is of the nature of those distempers, which, notwithstanding the dejection they occasion, raise in the patient's mind a violent desire of a cure. Answer the wishes of all the people, who groan under the unjust authority of Doria. Second the vows of the soundest part of the nobility, who secretly deplore the common misfortune of their countrymen, and think that, if weakness and cowardice increase daily among them, the pride of Giannettino Doria will not be so much blamed for having occasioned it, as the want of resolution in

the Count de Fiesco for having suffered it. The great esteem your good qualities have acquired you, has already done half the work. Let none speak of your youth as an obstacle to the success of so glorious a design; yours is an age where the heat of your blood, and the noble impulse of your courage, can inspire you with nothing but great designs; and in extraordinary actions, we have always more need of vigour and boldness, than of the cold reflections of a timorous prudence, which shows us all the inconveniences we have to fear. Besides, your reputation is so well established, that I may say without flattery, that with all the charms by which youth naturally acquires friends, you have gained that credit in the world which is seldom obtained but in a more advanced age. Wherefore you are under a happy obligation to keep up the idea which the world has conceived of your virtue. Knowing your perfect disinterestedness, I know not whether I ought to add to the considerations of the misery of our commonwealth, some motives which respect you in particular; but since there are some occasions where interest is so closely linked with honour, that it is almost as shameful not to regard it, as it is sometimes glorious to despise it. I beg you to cast your eyes on the condition in which you will be placed, if the present government lasts much longer. Those who join an uncommon merit to an illustrious birth, have always two powerful enemies, the envy of the courtiers, and the hatred of those who are in the most considerable posts. It is very difficult for those who have great fortunes not to incur the first, but it is impossible for those

who have a great deal of courage, and are much considered in the world, to escape the last. Prudence and good manners may indeed diminish that jealousy to which interest gives rise amongst equals, but they can never entirely remove from the minds of superiors the umbrage occasioned by the care they take of their safety. There are some virtues so beautiful, that they force even envy itself to do them homage. But whilst they are gaining a victory over this passion, they are increasing the strength of the other passion which I have mentioned. Hatred grows greater as merit rises, and virtue, under these circumstances, may be compared to a ship in a storm, which has no sooner overcome the fury of one wave, than it is attacked by another more violent than the first. Can you be ignorant that Giannettino Doria is gnawed with a secret envy at your birth, which is by far superior to his? At your riches, more honestly acquired than those he possesses? And at your reputation, which far surpasses any that he can ever pretend to? What reason have you to believe that envy, raised by these considerations, and animated by a violent ambition, will produce nothing in the mind of that insolent man, but weak and imperfect thoughts, and that it will not tend directly to your ruin? Have you any ground to hope, that if, by your prudence and the force of your virtue, you had overcome this envy, you could avoid that hatred with which the difference of your humours inspires him against you; and that his haughty spirit (which the wisdom of his uncle has hitherto kept within some bounds) could any longer bear the man who is the only obstacle to his designs? For my part, I think the conse-

quences of it are inevitable, because you cannot throw off those qualities which will draw his hatred upon you, nor divest yourself of your nature, and cease to be generous. But supposing it were in your power to conceal, under a modest appearance, that greatness of soul which raises you so much above the vulgar, can you imagine that Giannettino Doria, suspicious as he is, like all his fellow tyrants, would not be in continual distrust of your conduct? All the marks of your moderation and patience would seem to him artifices and snares to undo him. He could not imagine that one of the name of Fiesco could be capable of so much meanness; and, judging with reason of what you would be, from what you ought to be, he would make use, for your ruin, of that appearance of submission which you would assume, before him, for your safety. All the difference, therefore, betwixt your present condition, and that in which you might then expect to be placed, would be, that you would then be certainly assured of perishing with infamy; whereas, by following the generous sentiments which your inclination prompts, you are assured that the only misfortune which can befall you is to die in a glorious enterprise, and to gain, by your death, as great a share of honour as ever fell to the lot of any private man. If you see these things, as doubtless you may see them clearer than I, it is needless for me to enlarge upon them any longer. I only beseech you to draw from them two very material consequences. The first is, to be persuaded of the falsity of those maxims, which forbid our preventing the stroke of an enemy who designs to undo us, and which advise us to stay



till he has undone himself. We deceive ourselves if we think fortune has raised those whom we hate to the highest pinnacle of happiness, on purpose to give us the pleasure of seeing them fall. Grandeur is not always bordered with precipices ; usurpers have not always been unhappy ; and heaven is not always ready at hand, in the punishing bad men, to aid the good, and free them from the violence of their oppressors. Nature, more infallible than politics, instructs us to prevent the evil which threatens us, and which becomes incurable whilst prudence is considering its remedies. To what end should we so nicely examine the examples which have been proposed to us ? Do we not know that too great a subtlety in arguing softens our courage, and is often opposite to the greatest actions ? All affairs bear two different aspects ; and the same politicians who blame Pompey for having strengthened Cæsar's power by incensing him, have praised the conduct of Cicero in ruining Catiline. The other benefit which you ought to reap from these considerations is, that the great abilities with which Nature has endowed you, ought not to resemble those faint and ineffectual fires which afford only a dim glimmering of light without any heat, but ought to be like the light of the sun, which produces what it enlightens. Great thoughts should be followed by great effects, and in the execution as well as in the forming of your enterprise, nothing ought to hinder your courage from being the subduer of monsters, the avenger of injuries, the refuge of the distressed, the ally of the greatest kings, and the umpire of Italy. But if, at the moment I speak to you, the appearance of liberty which still remains in our republic



makes any impression on your mind, I have reason to fear that it will stop the course of your ambition ; for I know that one of so scrupulous a disposition, and so jealous of honour as you are, will hardly bear to be sullied with those terrible names of rebel and traitor. Yet these mighty scarecrows, which public opinion has framed to frighten the minds of the vulgar, never bring any shame to those who bear them for extraordinary actions, when they are attended with success. Scruples and greatness have ever been incompatible, and the narrow precepts of common prudence are fitter to be taught in the school of the people than in that of great men. The crime of usurping a crown is of so illustrious a nature, that it may pass for a virtue. Every degree of men has its peculiar reputation ; the common sort ought to be esteemed for their moderation, and the great ones for their ambition and courage. A poor pirate, who used to take little vessels in the time of Alexander, passed for an infamous robber ; whilst that prince, who took whole kingdoms from their rightful sovereigns, is to this day honoured as a hero ; and if Catiline is blamed as a traitor, Cæsar is spoken of as the greatest man that ever lived. In short, I need only set before your eyes all the princes now reigning in the world, and ask you if those from whom they hold their crowns were not usurpers ? But if these maxims are any way disagreeable to the nicety of your principles ; if the love of your country weighs more with you than your private glory ; if you have yet any regard left for the dying authority of the commonwealth, let us examine what honour will accrue to you

from respecting it when your enemies despise it, and whether it will be any great advantage to you to run the hazard of becoming their subject. Would to God the state were in its first splendour! nobody should then dissuade you, more strenuously than I, from the design to which I now excite you. If this commonwealth, which now retains nothing of liberty but the name, could preserve its authority, weak as it is, in the condition in which it is now placed, I own that there would be some reason to bear our misfortune with patience; and that if it was neither safe nor useful, it would at least be generous, to sacrifice our own interests to the vain image which is left us of liberty. But now that the artifices of Andrew Doria have confined the councils of the whole commonwealth to his single person, and the insolence of Giannetino has put all its forces into his hands; at the instant that Genoa has reached the period of its change, by that sacred but inevitable fate which sets certain bounds to the revolutions of all states; now that the minds of the citizens are too little united to live any longer under the government of many; in this extremity, I say, when tyranny can be no longer resisted but by establishing a lawful monarchy, what are we to do? Shall we offer our throats to be cut by those murderers who would join our ruin to that of the public liberty? Shall Count John Lewis de Fiesco look on with patience whilst Giannetino Doria insolently ascends the throne to which his fortune and his ambition raised him, without any one quality to deserve it? No, no, my lord; your virtue must dispute with him an advantage due to none but yourself. It is a thing as rare as it is much to be wished for, to find one's self in such a juncture,

as to be obliged, as you now are by the motive of the public good, and your private glory, to set a crown on your head. Do not fear that this action should acquire you the name of an interested man. On the contrary, nothing but the fear of danger, which is the meanest of all interests, can hinder your undertaking it; and nothing but glory, which is directly opposite to interest, is capable of prompting you to so great a design. If you are so nice that you cannot bear the appearance of blame, what will hinder you from restoring to your country that liberty which you have acquired for it, and from surrendering to it the crown which you will so well have deserved? It will then be in your own power to give a signal proof of the contempt you have for all kinds of interest, when you can part with it, and preserve your honour. The only thing that remains for me to represent to you is, that in my opinion you ought not to make use of the French. Any intelligence with foreigners is extremely odious; but in the present juncture, that which you propose cannot be useful to you, because, as Calcagno has observed, France is now sufficiently employed in defending itself against the Spanish and Imperial forces, which attack it powerfully on all sides. But supposing you could draw any assistance thence, consider that your altering your condition would only be changing your slavery; that you would be a slave to France, whose ally you may now become. Upon the whole, determine whether it is fit for a man of your abilities, merit, and quality, to resolve to suffer every thing, and be a victim to Doria's insolence; or else, by hazarding every thing, to shake off the yoke of tyranny, to expose yourself without ne-

cessity to the danger of becoming the slave of a foreign power, and to confine yourself as before within the bounds of a private gentleman's fortune."

Raphael Sacco, who acted as judge within the territories of the house of Fiesco, and who was the third person called to this council, seeing that the Count's inclinations were entirely conformable to Verrina's sentiments, thought that it would be to no purpose to contradict them; and on the other hand, judging that that action was extremely hazardous, he would not advise him to undertake it, and did not declare his opinion on that subject, referring himself (as to the main design) entirely to his master's will. Wherefore he applied himself only to maintain, that if it was absolutely resolved upon, it was necessary to make use of the French, saying that it would be an extraordinary piece of imprudence for the Count not to use all his credit and his forces where he ventured his whole fortune. That he could not understand how they came to advise the Count, to oppose himself singly to the arms of the Empire, Spain, and Italy, which would certainly unite against him; that it was indeed possible to take a town by surprise, but not to secure a state; that this last could not be done without a long series of years, without troops and alliances; and that the thought of seizing upon the sovereignty of Genoa, in the present disposition of the affairs of Europe was a rash resolution, which was attempted to be coloured under the name of a glorious undertaking. Verrina opposed to the utmost of his power this reasoning of Raphael Sacco, and reminded the Count of the reasons he had urged on that sub-

ject in his discourse ; by representing to him, more strongly than before, that the friendship of princes never outlived their interest, and that though the favour of the House of Austria seemed inseparably united to the Dorias, because they were useful to that House, it would be at an end as soon as they ceased to be so : whereas, if the Emperor saw the Count in a condition to be either useful or hurtful to him, he would soon forget the services of the others, and seek his friendship ; but that if he called in the French (besides that they are easily tired with every thing, and that their application to foreign affairs is subject to be influenced by the frequent revolutions which happen within that kingdom, and depends on the genius of those who govern), he must debar himself of all means of an accommodation with the Emperor, whose power in Italy was more considerable than theirs ; that it would therefore be time enough to seek the aid of France when he should see himself entirely excluded from an alliance with the Empire ; in which case, the interest of the French would be so far concerned not to abandon him, that they would not fail to succour him, because the Count remaining master of Genoa, they would always be in fear of his agreeing with their enemies, if they refused him the assistance which was necessary for his defence. That as to forces, there were no need of any greater to succeed in this design, than those which he had of his own, since he knew that there were but 250 soldiers in Genoa, and that Giannettino Doria's galleys were entirely disarmed. These reasons entirely determined the Count, because they were agreeable to his natural inclination for glory, and to that greatness of soul

which made nothing appear difficult to him that was honourable. In fine, he resolved to engage in this undertaking in his own strength, and to employ none in it, but those friends and servants which his high birth, his extraordinary courtesy, his inexhaustable liberality, and his other good qualities, had acquired for him.

There are many persons who have merit, courage, and ambition, and who form general ideas of raising themselves and improving their condition. But it is rare to meet with such as, having formed those ideas, know how to make choice of proper means for their execution, and who are not remiss in the continual care which is necessary to bring them to effect ; or, when they take that pains, they generally time it ill, and act with too much impatience for the event. This is so true, that in affairs of this nature, most men are too long in taking their resolutions, but will never allow themselves the necessary time for executing what they have resolved. They do not think early enough of disposing their actions to the end which they have proposed to themselves, to direct all their steps to the plan which they have once formed, to establish a stock of reputation, to gain friends, and finally, to centre all their views in the execution of their first design. On the contrary, we see them often change their views on a sudden, their mind appears disquieted and overburdened with the secret and the weight of their enterprise ; and amidst the changes and irregularity of their conduct, they always let slip something that may give a hold to those who watch over them, and offence to their enemies.

The Count de Fiesco very wisely remedied



these inconveniences ; for, knowing that he was naturally inclined to great things, and seeing that he should one day be able to bring these general inclinations to some particular and important design, which might tend to his own greatness, he gave himself entirely up to that thought ; and as he had of himself an incredible passion for glory, and a great deal of art to increase his reputation, he lived in such a manner, that all the great qualities that were to be observed in him seemed to proceed from his native disposition, and not from a studied conduct. He had always the same open, agreeable, and pleasant countenance : He was civil to every one, though with proper distinctions, according to different merit and quality. His liberality was so great, that he prevented the wants of his friends ; thus he gained the poor by his bounty, and the rich by his civility. He always kept his word religiously ; he had an unwearied desire of obliging ; his house and table were open to all persons ; he was magnificent in every thing, even to profuseness ; and never was any one better persuaded than he, that covetousness, stiffness, and pride, obscure the most shining qualities of great men. But what gave an extraordinary lustre to those he was possessed of, was the handsomeness of his person, and the graceful and noble air with which all his actions were accompanied, which were distinguishing marks of his illustrious birth, and which attracted every one's respect and inclination.

This conduct so secured for him the hearts of his friends, that not one of those who promised to serve him, failed either in his fidelity or discretion, in an affair of so nice a nature ; which, indeed, is very extraordinary in a conspiracy where



so many actors and so much secrecy are required, that, though it should happen that none should prove treacherous, it is hard to imagine that none should prove imprudent. But what was most wonderful in this was, that his enemies, seeing his open conduct, took no offence at it, because they attributed what was too shining in his actions to his natural temper, and not to a formed design.

This was without doubt one of the causes of the contempt with which Andrew Doria received the advices that were given him by Ferdinando Gonzaga and two or three others concerning this enterprise ; I say one of the causes, because, though the conduct of the Count contributed to the taking away the diffidence of this old politician, jealous of his authority, there must nevertheless have been some other reason for so great an infatuation. But it is hard to find out that cause, unless we ascribe it to Providence, which delights in showing the vanity of human prudence, and in confounding the pride of those who flatter themselves that they can unravel the several windings of the hearts of men, and that they have an infallible discernment for all things in the world. This presumption is never more ridiculous than in those great men whom continual study, profound meditation, and long experience in affairs, have so raised above the vulgar, and so intoxicated with a good opinion of themselves, that they rely on the confidence of their own judgment in the most difficult affairs, and hear the advice of others only to despise it. It is certain that most of those extraordinary men whom others go to consult like oracles, and who have so quick a penetration in things which are indifferent to them, are commonly blind in those which are of

greater importance to themselves. They are more unhappy than others, because they cannot guide themselves either by their own reason or by that of their friends.

The act of generosity which gained the Count de Fiesco many friends amongst the people, was his bounty to the silk-spinners, who made a considerable body of the inhabitants of Genoa. They were at that time extremely distressed by the misery occasioned by the late wars; the Count having learnt their condition from their consul, expressed a great concern at their poverty, and, at the same time ordered him to send those of them to his palace who had most need of relief. He supplied them abundantly with money and provisions, and begged them not to make any noise about his presents, because he expected no other reward from them but the satisfaction he felt within himself in succouring the afflicted; and accompanying these things with his natural courteousness and civility, he so gained the hearts of these poor people, that they were from that time entirely devoted to his service. But if, on the one hand, he gained the love and esteem of the poorest amongst the people by his liberalities, he did not forget, on the other, to make himself agreeable to the most considerable of them, by the promises of liberty which he artfully insinuated in his discourses, wherein he gave them to understand, that though he was of the body of the nobility, he was too reasonable not to sympathize, with a great deal of sorrow, in the oppression of the people.

There are some who accuse the republic of a great deal of imprudence on this occasion, and

maintain, that it was most imprudent in the senate to suffer the Count thus to oblige every body, and to gain with so much care the hearts of his fellow-citizens. I cannot deny that the maxim, on which this opinion is founded proceeds from the most refined politics ; for it seems that, aiming at the keeping private people in a state of mediocrity, its natural effect ought to be the safety of the whole. But I am satisfied that it is very unjust, because it corrupts the nature of good qualities, which by that means become hurtful or dangerous to the person that is possessed of them. I think the maxim even pernicious, because, by rendering merit suspicious, it chokes up all the seeds of virtue, and so disgusts men from the love of glory, that they never undertake great actions but with fear ; and they even are diverted from those which might be useful to the commonwealth, to avoid giving umbrage to the government. It happens also, that instead of keeping men of courage within the bounds of that equality which it prescribes, it often inclines them to give a free course to their ambition, and to take violent resolutions to shake off the yoke of so tyrannical a law.

The Count did not so absolutely rely on the good will of the common people, as to neglect securing the soldiery, who are chiefly necessary in these enterprises. He left Genoa in the beginning of the summer, in all appearance to visit his territories, but in reality to observe what persons fit for service might be found amongst his vassals, and to use them to warlike exercises, under pretence of the fear he feigned to be in of the Duke of Placentia. He was also willing to give the

necessary orders for his design of secretly introducing some men into Genoa, when occasion should require it, and of assuring himself of the sentiments of that Duke, who had promised him 2000 men of his best troops.

The Count, returning about the latter end of autumn, added to his usual conduct a profound dissimulation in what related to the House of Doria, expressing, on all occasions, a great veneration for the person of Andrew, and a strict friendship for Giannettino, in order to show all the world that their past divisions were entirely laid aside, and to give them all imaginable marks of an union that might be securely relied upon.

If what he said on the very day that he executed his enterprise be true, that he had long before been acquainted that his ruin had been resolved on by Giannettino Doria, and that that violent and unjust man, who was only restrained by the prudence of his uncle Andrew, whom he found subject to great distempers, had ordered Captain Lercaro to rid him of all the family of Fiesco, the moment that Andrew Doria should die; that he had letters beside him, which were convincing proofs that Giannettino had endeavoured to poison him three several times; and that he was, besides, certainly assured that the Emperor was ready to make him sovereign of Genoa. If, I say, all these things be true, I cannot think that the Count's dissimulation can be justly blamed; because, in affairs where our own life and the general interest of our country are at stake, sincerity is a virtue out of season; nature teaching us, by the example of the instinct of the most inconsiderable animals, that in these extremities the use of stratagems is

lawful to defend ourselves from violence and oppression.

But if the Count's complaints were only calumnies invented against the House of Doria, to give the better colour to his design, and to exasperate people's minds, it cannot be denied that these false marks of friendship, which he so affectedly gave them, were artifices unworthy of his great courage. And without doubt it would be difficult to justify such a conduct, but by the necessity which the insolence and power of Giannettino had imposed on him to live in that manner.

The Count had purchased four galleys from the Duke of Placentia, which he kept in the Pope's pay, under the name of his brother Jerome. As he judged that the most necessary thing to his design was to make himself master of the port, he sent for one of them to Genoa, under pretence of sending it on a cruise to the Levant, and at the same time took occasion to get into the city, without suspicion, some of the soldiers which came to him from his territories and from Placentia, whereof some passed for people of the garrison, some for adventurers that were seeking employment, some for seamen, and a great many even for galley slaves.

Verrina very artfully introduced amongst the companies of the city fifteen or twenty soldiers, who were vassals to the Count, and corrupted others of the garrison. He obtained promises from the most considerable and most enterprising among the people, of all manner of assistance in the execution of a private design, intended, as he said, against some of their enemies. Calcagno and Sacco were, on their side, employing themselves with no

less diligence and industry ; and I think I cannot better express the art with which these four persons conducted this enterprise, than by saying that they engaged in it above ten thousand people, without discovering their true design to any one.

Things being thus disposed, nothing was wanting but the choice of a day for the execution, in which there happened some difficulties. Verrina's opinion was, that they should invite to a new mass \* Giannetino and Andrew Doria, and Adam Centurioni, with those of the nobility who were the best affected to that party. He offered to kill them himself. This proposal was no sooner made than rejected by the Count, who conceived so much horror at it, that he cried out that he would never consent to profane the most sacred mystery of our religion to facilitate the success of his undertaking. It was afterwards proposed to take the opportunity of the marriage of a sister of Giannetino Doria's with Julius Cibo, Marquis de Masse, the Count's brother-in-law, and they judged that the execution of their design would be easier on that occasion, because the Count would have the pretence of making an entertainment for all the relations of that family, and thereby be furnished with the means of cutting them all off at a blow. But the Count's generosity moved him again to oppose this black piece of treachery, as many people assert, and it may easily be believed of one of his disposition ; although Doria's friends

\* A mass celebrated by some person of note the first time of his officiating as a priest, to which it is common to invite people of distinction.



have given out that he had resolved to make use of that way, if an affair which caused Giannettino Doria, on that very day, to take a short journey out of Genoa, had not changed his mind. At last, after several deliberations, the night of the second of January was pitched upon for this enterprise, and the necessary orders were at the same time given out with a great deal of conduct, Verrina, Calcagno, and Sacco, disposing on their side of those whom they had gained. The Count got a great number of arms secretly conveyed into his palace, and sent to observe the places of which they were to make themselves masters; he introduced by small numbers, and without noise, into a part of his palace, separate from the rest, the soldiers who were destined to begin the execution: And the appointed day being come, the better to cover his design, he made a great many visits, and even went towards evening to the palace of Doria, where meeting Giannettino's children, he took them one after another in his arms, and played with them a long time before their father, whom he afterwards desired to give orders to the officers of his galleys, not to hinder the departure of the Count's galley, which was that night to sail to the Levant: after which he took leave of him with his usual civilities, and in going home he called on Tomaso Assereto, with whom he met above thirty of those gentlemen who were called popular, whom Verrina had caused him to meet there, as by accident, whence the Count carried them all to sup with him. When he arrived at his palace, he sent Verrina all over the city, to the senate-house and to that of Doria, to observe if they had no intimation of his design; and having heard that all things were as quiet as



usual, he ordered the doors of his palace to be shut, with direction, however, to let in all those who should desire it, but to let out no person whatsoever.

As he perceived that his guests were extremely surprised to find, instead of a feast prepared for them, nothing but arms, strange faces, and soldiers, he gathered them together in a hall, and expressing in his countenance a noble assurance, he spoke to them in this manner :

“ We have, my friends, already suffered too much, from the insolence of Giannettino, and the tyranny of Andrew Doria. We have not a moment to lose, if we have a mind to secure our lives and liberties from the oppression that threatens them. Is there any one here that can be ignorant of the pressing danger of the commonwealth? What can you imagine the twenty galleys which besiege our harbour are intended for? What is the design of all the forces and the intelligence which these two tyrants have prepared? Behold them ready to triumph over our patience, and to build their unjust authority on the ruins of this state. It is now no longer time to deplore our miseries in private, we must hazard all things to free ourselves from them. Since the evil is so violent, the remedies must be so too; and if the fear of falling into the most shameful slavery has any power over your minds, you must make a vigorous attempt to break your fetters, and prevent those that would load you with new ones; for I cannot imagine you any longer capable of bearing the uncle's injustice, or the nephew's pride. I cannot imagine, I say, that there is one amongst you that will be content to serve those as masters,

who ought to think themselves honoured enough with being your equals. Were we insensible to the interest of the commonwealth, we cannot be so to our own. Every one of us has but too much reason to revenge himself, and our revenge is both just and glorious, since our private resentment is joined to our zeal for the public good, and that we cannot abandon our own interests without betraying those of our country. It is now in your power to secure its quiet and your own; you want only the will to be happy, to become so. I have provided for every thing which might obstruct your happiness; I have laid open to you a way to glory, and am ready to lead you in it, if you are disposed to follow me. The preparations you see here ought at this time to encourage you more than they have surprised you; and the astonishment which I at first observed in your faces, ought to be changed into a glorious resolution of employing these warlike instruments with vigour, to work the destruction of our common enemies, and the preservation of our liberty. I should offend your courage if I imagined you capable, at the sight of these objects, to deliberate about the use of them. That use is certain, by the good order which I hope to put things into; it is of the greatest advantage to you; it is just, because of the oppression you suffer; it is glorious, by the greatness of the undertaking. I might prove by these letters, that the Emperor has promised Andrew Doria the sovereignty of Genoa, and is ready to fulfil his promise. I could show you, by other letters I possess, that Giannettino has three times attempted to hire people to poison me. It would be easy for me to prove to you, that he has given orders to

Lercaro to murder me and all my family, the moment his uncle should die ; but the knowledge of all these horrid and infamous treacheries, would add nothing to the horror you already have for these monsters. Methinks I see your eyes sparkle with the generous fire with which a just revenge inspires you ; I see you are more impatient than I to express your resentment, to insure your estates, your peace, and the honour of your families. Let us then, my dear fellow-citizens, save the reputation of Genoa ; let us preserve our country's liberty ; and let us show the world, that there are yet left in this state honest men who have the heart to bring tyrants to destruction."

The company were very much astonished at these words ; but as almost all of them were zealous friends to Count de Fiesco, and as some of them joined to that friendship the exalted hopes with which they flattered themselves, in case their enterprise succeeded, and the rest feared his resentment if they refused to follow his fortune, they promised him all manner of service. There were but two amongst that number, which was pretty considerable, that begged of him not to engage them in that affair ; whether their profession, remote from dangers, and their humour, averse to violence, rendered them incapable (as they said) to be of any service in an action where many dangers were to be run, and many murders to be committed ; or whether they covered, under the appearance of a dissembled fear, the real affection which they had for the House of Doria, or for some of his party. It is certain that the Count pressed them no farther, and was satisfied with shutting them up in a room, to take from them the means

of discovering his design. His gentle usage of these two persons, makes me disbelieve what several historians, prejudiced against his memory, have published ; which is, that the discourse he made in this assembly was filled with nothing but threats against those who should refuse to assist him ; and I believe that we may with reason form the same judgment of the cruel and impious words which they put into his mouth on the night of the execution of his enterprise. For what likelihood is there that a man of his condition, born with an extraordinary passion for glory, should suffer himself to be transported to such expressions as cannot be remembered without horror, and could be of no manner of use to his designs ? Be that as it will, as soon as he had ended his speech to those persons, and had informed them of the order of his enterprise, he went into his lady's apartment, whom he found in tears, foreseeing that the great preparations which were making in the house, could not but be designed by her husband for some dangerous undertaking. He, therefore, thought it proper no longer to conceal the truth from her, but he endeavoured to take away her fears by all the reasons which he could think of ; and he represented to her how far he had engaged himself, and the impossibility of retreating. She did her utmost to dissuade him from that action, and made use of the power which his love for her gave her over his mind ; but neither her prayers nor tears could shake his resolution. Paul Pansa, who had been his governor, and for whom he had a great veneration, joined with the Countess, and left nothing untried that might bring him back to the duty of a good citizen, or set before him the

hazard he ran in this occasion. The Count was as little moved with his governor's exhortations, as he had been with the fondness and tears of his wife. \* He had (as it is said of Cæsar) passed the Rubicon, and returned to the hall where he had left his guests. He gave the last directions for the execution of his enterprise. He ordered an hundred and fifty men, chosen from his best soldiers, to go into that part of the city called the borough, whither he was to follow them, accompanied by the nobility. Cornelius, his natural brother, had orders, as soon as they came thither, to march (with a detachment of thirty men) to the gate of the arch, and to make himself master of it. Jerome and Ottobon, his brothers, with Vincent Calcagno, were charged to take the gate of St Thomas, when they heard the cannon fired from the Count's galley, commanded by Verrina, which was ready to shut up the mouth of the basin, and to invest that of Andrew Doria. The Count was to get to that gate by land, after he had left guards in his way at the arches of St Andrew and St Donatus, and at the Place des Sauvages, with the least noise possible. † Thomas Assereto was ordered to seize that

\* After trying in vain to soothe his Countess, whose name was Leonora, of an illustrious Genoese family, Fiesco, almost overcome by the feelings with which her tenderness had inspired him, rushed from her, exclaiming, as he quitted the apartment, "Farewell, you shall either never see me more, or you shall behold to-morrow every thing in Genoa subject to your power." Mascardi has given the Countess' supposed expostulations in a very affecting manner, which the Cardinal de Retz has omitted.

† It is to be observed that Genoa is built in the form of an amphitheatre, and is enclosed by double walls, six miles in circumference.

gate by giving the word, which he could easily know, having an employment under Giannettino Doria. As this action was the most important point of the enterprise, because, if it failed, those who were in the Count's galley could have no communication with the rest of the conspirators, it was judged proper, to render it still more easy, that Scipio Borgognino, a vassal of the Count, and a resolute soldier, should throw himself into the basin with armed feluccas, and should land on that side, at the same time that Thomas Assereto should attack that gate on the outside. It was also resolved, that the moment that Jerome and Ottobon de Fiesco should be masters of St Thomas' Gate, which was near the palace of Doria, one of them should force that palace, and kill Andrew and Giannettino : And because there was some reason to apprehend that Giannettino, being roused by the noise which would be made at the gates, might get into Lewis Giulia's felucca to come and give his orders, they left three armed feluccas to prevent it. To these orders there was added a general one, that all the conspirators should call to the people in the name of Fiesco, and cry out, *Liberty*, that those of the city whose affection they were assured of, might not be surprised, and that, seeing that the Count was the author of this action, they might join his people.

It is not easy to determine whether it had not been more advantageous and safe to have made but one body of all these troops which were separated in so many different quarters, so remote from each other, than to divide them in that manner ; because their number was considerable enough to make it probable, that if they had all entered the



same way into the town, they had carried all before them, and had drawn the people to favour the victorious party, wherever they had passed: whereas, being divided, they could act but weakly, and ran the risk of committing mistakes, and of being all defeated one after the other. For it is certain that a great deal of exactness is requisite to make the times of several attacks agree, and a great deal of good fortune for them all to succeed alike. So many heads and hands are in these occasions necessary to concur in the same action, that the least fault in one of them often disconcerts all the rest, as the disorder of a single wheel may stop the motion of the greatest machine: and it is very difficult to conceive, that during the night and amidst the tumult which generally accompanies these kinds of enterprises, either the heart or the judgment of some of the conspirators should not fail them, and that thinking danger more terrible when near than when afar off, they should not repent their engaging in such a design. But when they move all together, the example of others animates and emboldens the most timorous, who are forced to suffer themselves to be carried away by the multitude, and to do out of mere necessity what the brave do out of courage.

Those who are of a contrary opinion, hold that in these enterprises which are executed by night, in a city where the conspirators have a great deal of intelligence, and are favoured by most of the people, and where they may make themselves masters of the principal posts before their enemies are in a condition to dispute those posts with them, it is better to form several bodies, and make dif-



ferent attacks in a great many places ; because, by giving several alarms at the same time in different parts, those who would defend themselves are obliged to divide their forces, without knowing how many are to be detached ; and the fright which such sudden attempts commonly create, is much stronger when the noise comes from all sides, than when they are only to provide against the danger in one single place. Besides, in narrow streets, like those of Genoa, \* a small number is equally as serviceable as a greater, and that ten men, by the help of a barricado, if they are attacked only in front, may stop an hundred times as many of the bravest men in the world, and give time to those who are behind them to rally. Lastly, those who are of the latter opinion, think that in an enterprise like this, it is less advantageous to the party of the conspirators to join their forces in one body, than to spread them in different parts of the city, having the favour of the greatest part of the inhabitants, because they raise them all at once, and the citizens are more ready to take up arms when they see themselves supported, and are more capable of serving when they have regular troops and people of credit at their head.

All these reasons being justly weighed on each side, I think that the Count acted very judiciously ; for it seems to me that on this occasion, the inconveniences which we have just mentioned

\* The streets of Genoa, like all other ancient cities, and especially sea-ports, were then extremely inconvenient, and are to this day narrow and irregular, with the exception of three, the *Strada Balbi*, the *Strada Nuova*, and the *Strada Nuovissima*, which were not then in existence.

in the way of acting which he made choice of, were less to be feared than they commonly are, because his party was not only composed of the soldiery and nobility, but also of a great number of the common people, of whose fidelity he was assured. So that, having considerable forces in all the quarters of Genoa, he had reason to think that the garrison which was extremely weak, and those who did not favour him, could be no great hinderance to his designs, nor make any resistance sufficient to disturb those who fought for him. Having, therefore, left his palace, he divided his men according to the order which he had resolved on; and at the same time that the cannon, which was ordered for a signal, was fired from his galley, Cornelius surprised the Gate of the Arch, of which he made himself master without any trouble. Ottobon and Jerome, the Count's brothers, did not find so much facility with that of St Thomas, from the resistance of Captain Sebastian Lercaro and his brother, who maintained their post a considerable time. But the latter having been killed, and the other taken prisoner, some even amongst their soldiers who had intelligence of the design, by turning their arms in favour of the Fiescos, made those of the guard run off, and abandon their post to the enemies. Giannettino Doria, awakened either by the noise which was made at the gate, or by the outcry which was made at the same time in the harbour, rose in great haste, and being accompanied by none but a page who carried a flambeau before him, he ran to St Thomas' Gate, where, being discovered by the conspirators, he was killed as soon as he came.

The precipitancy of Giannettino saved Andrew

Doria's life, and gave him time to get on horse-back, and to retire fifteen miles from Genoa ; \* because Jerome de Fiesco, who had orders from his brother to force Doria's palace as soon as he had seized St Thomas' Gate, seeing that Giannettino had been killed by his own imprudence, preferred the preservation of the immense riches which were in the palace, and which it would have been difficult to save from the soldiers, to the taking of Andrew Doria, whom he no longer looked upon but as a worn-out old man, whose ruin was indifferent. Whilst these things were doing about St Thomas' Gate, Assereto and Scipio Borgognino executed their orders with all possible success ; they killed those who made any resistance at the gate next the basin, and pushed the rest so vigorously, that they did not give them time to rally, and at last they secured that considerable post.

The Count having, in his passage, left parties to guard those posts which he reckoned the most important, got into the basin, the entrance of which he found entirely open, and joined himself to Verina, who had already attacked, with his galley, those of Andrew Doria. He found them almost all disarmed, and easily made himself master of them. Fearing, in this confusion, that the crew, who were chiefly slaves, would mutiny, and relieve the captain's galley, in which he heard a great noise, he ran in haste to give his orders about it ; but while doing so, the board on which he was proceeding, overturned, and he fell into the sea.

\* The Cardinal forgets, however, to mention, that the elder Doria left Genoa with very great reluctance, and was almost forced away by his friends.

The weight of his armour, and the mud, hindered him from getting up again ; and he was drowned at the very moment when victory had made him master of Genoa. The darkness of the night, joined to the confused noise that was made on all parts, kept from his men the knowledge of this accident ; so that, without perceiving the loss they had sustained, they made an end of securing the harbour and the gallies.

Ottobon, who was come to that place after he had executed his first design, staid to command there ; and Jerome, who had followed him, left Vincent Calcagno at St Thomas' Gate, and left the harbour with two hundred men, to stir up the populace in the streets, and collect together as many people as he could. Verrina, on the other hand, did the same thing ; and thus a great number of persons being gathered about them, nobody dared appear any longer in the streets without declaring for Fiesco's party. The greatest part of the nobility kept close at home during the noise, every one fearing the plunder of his house. The most courageous went to the senate-house \* with the Emperor's ambassador, who would have run away from the city, had it not been for the remonstrances of Paul Lasagna, a man of great authority among the people. Cardinal Doria and Adam Centurione went thither also, and resolved,

\* Il Palazza della Signoria. It was the palace of the Republic, where those senators had the courage to assemble, amid the general consternation. It was the ancient palace of the Doge, and is at present one of the most remarkable edifices in Genoa.

with Nicolas Franco, at that time head of the commonwealth, there being then no Duke, \* to send Boniface Lomellino, Cristopher Palavicini, and Antony Calva, with fifty soldiers of the garrison, to defend St Thomas' Gate. But these having met with a body of the conspirators, and being abandoned by part of their men, were obliged to retire into the house of Adam Centurione, where, having met with Francis Grimaldi, Dominic Doria, and some other gentlemen, they again took courage, and returned to the same gate by a different way. But they found it so well guarded, and were charged so vigorously, that they left Boniface Lomellino prisoner, who distinguished himself in that action by his courage, and happily escaped out of the conspirators' hands.

The Senate, finding that force had been tried in vain, had recourse to remonstrances, and deputed another Jerome de Fiesco, † a relation of the Count, and Jerome Canevale, to demand of the Count the reason of that commotion; and immediately after Cardinal Doria, who was allied to him, assisted by John Baptista Lercaro, and Bernard Castagno, both senators, resolved, at the desire of the Senate, to go and confer with the Count, and endeavour to soften him. But seeing things in so great a confusion, that if he went through the city he should expose his dignity (to no purpose) to the insults of an incensed people, he would not go, but remained at the senate-

\* Or Doge.

† There were two relations of the Count of that name, one of them, the reader will have perceived, was active in the conspiracy.

house. So that the Senate gave that commission to Augustino Lomellino, Hector de Fiesco, Ansaldo Justiniani, Ambrose Spinola, and John Balliano, who, seeing a troop of armed men coming towards them, imagined it was the Count, and waited for him at St Siro. As soon as the conspirators perceived them, they charged them, and put Lomellino and Hector de Fiesco to flight. Ansaldo Justiniani stood his ground, and, addressing himself to Jerome, who was at the head of that party, he demanded of him, in the name of the commonwealth, where the Count was. The conspirators had just heard of his death. Verrina, having long sought him in vain, was got into his galley in a desperate condition, because the news from all quarters of the town mentioned nothing of his appearing any where. This made Jerome answer Justiniani boldly, and with the greatest imprudence, that it was now no longer time to look for any other Count than himself, and that he would have the senate-house immediately surrendered to him.

The Senate having learnt by this discourse the death of the Count, resumed their courage, and sent twelve gentlemen to rally those of the guard and of the people whom they could put in a posture of defence. Some, even of the hottest of Fiesco's party, began to be surprised; several, who had neither the same affection for, nor the same confidence in, Jerome, that they had for his brother, dispersed themselves at the very report of his death; and confusion getting in amongst the conspirators, those in the senate-house perceived it. and deliberated whether they should go and attack them, or treat with them. The first of these was proposed as the most honourable way, but the



second was followed as the safest. Paul Pansa, a man of the greatest consideration in the commonwealth, and ever attached to the house of Fiesco, was chosen as the fittest man for that purpose. The senate ordered him to carry a general pardon to Jerome for himself and his accomplices. He consented to this agreement at the persuasion of Pansa. The pardon was signed at the same time, and sealed with all the necessary formalities, by Ambrose Senaregna secretary to the republic; and thus Jerome de Fiesco left Genoa with all those of his party, and retired to Montobio. Ottobon, Verrina, Calcagno, and Sacco, who had made their escape in the Count's galley, steered towards France, and arrived at Marseilles, after having sent back to the mouth of the Vere, without doing them any hurt, Sebastian Lercaro, Manfredo Centurioni, and Vincent Varcaro, whom they had taken at St Thomas' Gate. The Count's body was found at the end of four days, and having been left some time on the banks of the harbour, without burial, it was at last thrown into the sea by the command of Andrew Doria. Benedict Centurioni and Dominic Doria, were the next day deputed to Andrew to condole with him in the name of the republic on the death of Giannettino, and to bring him back into the city, where he was received with all imaginable honours. He went to the senate the day after, where he represented to them in a vehement declamation, which he took care to support with the credit of his friends, that the commonwealth was not obliged to stand to the agreement which they had made with the Fiescos, since it had been concluded against all form, and signed (as it were) sword in hand. He magnified extremely the danger of



suffering subjects to treat in that manner with their sovereigns ; and insisted that the impunity of a crime of that consequence would be a fatal example to the commonwealth. In short, Andrew Doria so artfully covered his private interests under the veil of the general good, and so well backed his passion with his authority, that although there were many persons that could not approve of so great a breach of public faith, the senate nevertheless declared all the conspirators guilty of high treason, ordered the magnificent palace of Fiesco to be razed to the ground, condemned the Count's brothers and the principal of his faction to death, punished with a fifty years banishment all those who had the least hand in that enterprise, and ordered that Jerome de Fiesco should be commanded to surrender the fortress of Montobio into the hands of the republic. This last point was not so easy to execute as the rest, and as the place was strong by its situation, and by its fortifications which they were continually at work upon ; it was judged properest to try the most gentle means to get it out of the hands of the Fiescos, before they made use of force, the success of which is always doubtful. Paul Pansa had orders from the senate to go thither as soon as possible, and to offer Jerome reasonable conditions on the part of the commonwealth ; but they received no other answer from him but reproaches for breaking faith with his friends, and a pretty haughty refusal to treat with the Genoese. The Emperor, who feared that the French might make themselves masters of that castle, which is of the greatest importance for the safety of Genoa, earnestly pressed the senate to besiege it, and fur-

nished them with all necessary assistance for that purpose. Augustine Spinola, a captain of reputation, had that employment ; he invested the place, which he besieged for forty days, and at last obliged those who were in it to surrender at discretion.

Some historians accuse Verrina, Calcagno, and Sacco, of having advised Jerome to so dishonourable a capitulation, by reason of the cold reception they had received in France, whence they were returned, to throw themselves into that place. The taking of it created new disorders in the commonwealth, on account of the variety of opinions amongst the senators touching the punishment of the prisoners. Many persons inclined to lenity, and would have had a pardon for young Jerome, maintaining that his family had been sufficiently punished by the death of the Count, and the loss of all their estate. But Andrew Doria, exasperated against them, once more overcame the senate's clemency, and was the cause of the execution of Jerome de Fiesco, Verrina, Calcagno, and Assereto, and of the bloody arrest against Ottobon, forbidding his posterity as far as the fifth generation to come near Genoa.

Let us stop here, and consider exactly what happened in the execution of this great design. Let us, if it be possible, draw from the infinite number of faults, which we may observe in it, examples of human frailty, and let us own that this enterprise, considered in its beginnings as a masterpiece of courage and conduct amongst men, appears in the sequel of it full of the common effects of the meanness and imperfection of our nature. For, after all, how shameful was it in An-

drew Doria to abandon the city at the first noise, without making the least attempt to appease, by his authority, that popular commotion? \* How great an infatuation was it in him to neglect the advices he received on all hands, of the Count's enterprise? How great an imprudence was it in Giannettino to go alone, and in the darkness of the night, to St Thomas' Gate, to remedy a disorder which he had no reason to despise, being ignorant of the cause of it? How great a coward was Cardinal Doria, not to dare to leave the Senate, and endeavour to retain the people by the respect they owed to his dignity? How imprudent were the Senate not to assemble all their forces, at the first alarm, to stop at once the progress of the conspirators in the principal posts of the city, instead of sending only weak succours, which could be of no considerable service? And, lastly, what kind of conduct was it to endeavour to reclaim by remonstrances a professed rebel, who had arms in his hands, and who found himself the strongest? But, after a formal treaty, how pernicious a maxim was it in that Senate to violate the public faith, and to break a promise so solemnly given to Jerome and Ottobon de Fiesco? For if the fear of such usage may be useful to a state, by keeping within the bounds of their duty those who might

• The Cardinal's admiration of this enterprise has made him forget that the elder Doria could hardly be prevailed on to leave the city. There is more reason in his second question than in his first. It was not *shameful* in Doria to leave Genoa. He was at this time seventy-nine years of age, and could have made but a feeble resistance to the conspirators, with whom his former authority would have been nothing.

have any thought of revolting, it may also be very pernicious to it, by taking away from those who have revolted all hopes of a pardon. And, indeed, it is hard to comprehend how those politicians, who were reckoned very able men, were not afraid, by this example, of throwing into despair Jerome de Fiesco, who still held the rock of Montobio, which he could have put into the hands of foreigners, and the loss of which was of the greatest importance to the city of Genoa. But if those we have been speaking of were guilty of remarkable faults in this occasion, we may say that the conspirators committed still greater errors after they had lost their chief. The Count's valour and good conduct, which were in some measure the supreme intelligences which governed all the motions of his party, failing by his death, that party fell at once into a disorder which completed its ruin. Jerome de Fiesco, who, on many accounts, was obliged to conceal his brother's death, was the first that published it, and thereby gave his enemies a fresh courage, and possessed the minds of his friends with fear. Ottobon, Verrina, Calcagno, and Sacco, who had made their escape in the galley, set at liberty, almost as soon as they had left Genoa, the prisoners whom they had in their hands, without foreseeing that they might become necessary to them for making their accommodation. Verrina having heard of the Count's death, retired in his galley, and basely abandoned an affair of that consequence to the conduct of Jerome, who had neither experience sufficient, nor authority enough amongst the conspirators, to finish it. That same Jerome made a treaty with the Senate, and agreed to return to the condition of a private man, after having been on

the point of becoming a sovereign. He afterwards made a shameful capitulation in Montobio upon the promise of those who had already broke their faith with him. Verrina, Calcagno, and Sacco, the principal actors in this conspiracy, and the most criminal of all the Count's accomplices, persuaded Jerome to that mean action, upon the hopes that were given them of impunity, choosing rather to run the hazard of dying by the hands of the executioner, than to fall honourably in the siege.

Thus ended this great enterprise. Thus died John Lewis de Fiesco, Count de Lavagna, whom some honour with the greatest encomiums, others load with blame, and many excuse. If we consider the maxim which advises us always to respect the existing government of the country to which we belong, without doubt his ambition is criminal. If we respect his courage and all the great qualities which shone forth in the conduct of that action, it appears noble and generous. If we regard the power of the House of Doria, which gave him just cause to apprehend the ruin of the commonwealth and his own, it is excusable. But in which way soever we speak of it, the most passionate tongues and pens cannot disown but that the ill they can say of him was common to him with the most illustrious men. He was born in a small state, where all private conditions were beneath his courage and his merit; the natural turbulence of his countrymen, ever prone to novelty; the loftiness of his own mind, his youth, his great estate, the number and flatteries of his friends, the favour of the people, his being courted by foreign princes, and, lastly, the general esteem of every one, were powerful sedu-

cers to inspire with ambition a more moderate mind than his. The sequel of his enterprise was one of those accidents which human wisdom cannot foresee. Had the success been as happy, as the conduct of it was full of prudence and vigour, it is to be believed that the sovereignty of Genoa had not bounded his courage or his fortune, and that those who condemned his memory after his death, would have been the loudest in his praise whilst he lived. The authors who have blackened him with so many calumnies to satisfy the passion of the Dorias, and to justify the breach of faith of the senate, had by a contrary interest made his panegyric, and posterity had counted him amongst the heroes of his age. So true it is, that good or ill success is commonly the rule of the praise or blame given to extraordinary actions. However, I think we may say with all the equity required in an historian that gives his judgment on the reputation of men, that nothing was wanting to that of the Count de Fiesco but a longer life, and more upright occasions of acquiring glory. \*

\* The preceding is a narrative of perhaps one of the most extraordinary and daring enterprises ever attempted. But it is almost impossible to agree with the Cardinal's reflections in the concluding passage. He seems to imagine that no revolt or conspiracy is treasonable, if it prove successful, simply because those who are loudest in its condemnation when unsuccessful, would be the first to applaud, if its contrivers were otherwise. This is a species of reasoning with which no sound-thinking man will agree. This note is inserted, merely to make the reader aware of the sophistry which pervades the Cardinal's peroration, which, were it practised, would lead to very dangerous and destructive consequences.



IV.

---

THE

DEATH OF DON CARLOS,

SON OF

PHILIP II. OF SPAIN,

A. D. 1588.





THE  
DEATH OF DON CARLOS,  
SON OF  
PHILIP II. OF SPAIN,

A. D. 1588.

---

To Flanders, Pisa, straight my letters send,  
Tell them the injured Carlos is their friend,  
And that to head their forces I design,  
To vindicate their cause if they dare mine.

OTWAY'S *Tragedy of Don Carlos.*

THE story of Don Carlos, son of Philip II. of Spain, is one of those mysteries which it is difficult to unfold. An obscurity attends it, which probably originated with Philip himself, in order to restrain any inquiry into the melancholy fate of his son ; and hence, this obscurity has afforded a theme for numerous romancers, who have execrated the conduct of Philip, while setting forth the disappointed attachment of Don Carlos and his step-mother.

Our story will be brief. Every one knows the remarkable manner in which Charles V, the father of Philip II, retired from the world, and resigned his vast possessions both in the Old and New World to his son. The transition from a throne to the

gloomy seclusion of the monastic cell, from possessing the chief influence in Europe, and maintaining a brilliant rivalry with his contemporaries, to that of obscurity, listlessness, and contentment amid the austere rites of the Catholic faith, afforded a striking instance of the vanity of human greatness, of their innumerable cares, and harassing intrigues. The schemes of glory and ambition which Charles V. buried in his convent, he would, indeed, have gladly seen Philip pursue ; and, notwithstanding his own retirement, and conviction of the burden which he himself had found intolerable, the Emperor still wished to secure an accession of his own greatness to his son, to urge him to the pursuit of glory, and to consolidate his widely extended dominions, which he knew well conferred rather the appearance of strength than the reality.

When Charles V. abdicated the throne, though disappointed in his schemes, his son Philip II. was still the most powerful monarch of his age. It was, however, before that event, that the character of Philip was strikingly contrasted with that of his father. At the age of sixteen he married Mary, a princess of Portugal, who died two years afterwards in childbed, after having given birth to Don Carlos. Nine years afterwards, in 1554, when he was in the twenty-seventh year of his age, he married the Princess Mary of England—a marriage which had been negotiated by his father the Emperor ; and Charles himself, it is said, if Philip had declined this alliance, had thoughts of offering himself to Mary, not wishing to lose such an opportunity of augmenting his power. But Philip was as ambitious as his father, and he readily consented to marry a princess of thirty-seven,

disagreeable in her manners, cruel in her disposition, destitute of every female charm, who even excelled him in bigotry and zeal for the extirpation of heresy.

With this part of Philip's history, as also of his fitting out the famous Spanish Armada, and of the descent he meditated on Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth, every one is familiar. Mary died childless, and Don Carlos was as yet the heir of the Spanish crown. The early history of the Prince is involved in obscurity; but it is generally agreed that he closely resembled Philip himself in many particulars. Deformed in his person, his temper was violent and irascible; nor did he ever give any remarkable indication that his understanding was profound, or that he had any capacity for government. As a proof of his disposition, it is said, that on one occasion, as he and his governor, Don Garcia de Toledo, who was greatly attached to him, were riding together in a retired place, the latter having expostulated with him on his conduct, the Prince drew his sword, and would have slain Don Garcia, had he not escaped by the swiftness of his horse. Yet he had scarcely arrived at the years of manhood, before he evinced the utmost restlessness to be admitted into a share of the government, which Philip as steadily opposed, either from jealousy, or from a knowledge of his incapacity to discharge any important trust. Don Carlos was not of a disposition to endure this opposition, and the proceedings of his father in various matters still farther excited his disgust.

The superstition which predominates in Spain, wanted not a zealous patron in the person of Philip II. He established the Inquisition in his do-

minions,—a tribunal which he found often of considerable importance to his affairs, and which, for more than two centuries afterwards, scourged that kingdom. In the year 1559, on a visit to Valladolid, he resolved to give a proof of his zeal for the Church and his detestation of heresy, by presiding at an *Auto-da-fé*. One of these acts had been recently performed before his arrival in that city, on which occasion a number of Protestants had been committed to the flames. There were still, however, upwards of thirty remaining in the dungeons of the Inquisition, against whom the same dreadful sentence had been denounced. As Philip, on one occasion, had solemnly dedicated his reign to the defence of the Roman faith, and the extirpation of heresy, he desired the Inquisitors to appoint a day for the execution of these unhappy victims, and he resolved to be himself a witness of their agonies. The dreadful ceremony was accordingly conducted by the Inquisitors with all the pomp and solemnity which they could devise; and Philip, attended by his sister, Don Carlos, and a number of the nobles, exulted in the atrocious spectacle. After a sermon had been preached by the Bishop of Zamora, he again swore a solemn oath, administered to him by the Inquisitor-General, that he would support the tribunal, and compel his subjects every where to abjure the heresies of Luther. The inhuman sacrifice then commenced. Among the victims was a nobleman named Don Carlos di Sessa, who, when conducted to the stake, turned his streaming eyes towards the King, and, with uplifted hands, exclaimed, “Canst thou thus, O King, witness the torments of thy subjects? Save

us from this cruel death, for we deserve it not." "No," replied Philip, "I would myself carry wood to burn my own son were he such a wretch as thou." And he sat unmoved, and beheld the spectacle.

From such a father, Don Carlos could only look for the most summary treatment, if found engaged in intrigues. Mutual disgusts had arisen between them, accelerated by the violent impetuosity of Don Carlos, and Philip behaved towards him with distance and reserve. The former was mortified still farther, when he beheld the royal confidence enjoyed by noblemen towards whom he entertained an unconquerable aversion, partly on that account, and partly because he considered them as spies set over his conduct. These were the famous Ferdinand Alvarez, Duke of Alva, renowned as a general, but not less famous for his cruelty, Ruy Gomez de Sylva, and Spinoza, President of the Council. Towards the former, indeed, Don Carlos did not conceal his resentments; and on more than one occasion he had threatened the Duke, and even attempted his life, for accepting the government of the Netherlands, to which Don Carlos himself aspired.

But there was another cause sufficient to rouse the spirit of Don Carlos, and which probably exasperated him still more against Alva, as he was the person who carried on the negotiation. While Philip, his father, was engaged in making overtures of marriage to Elizabeth of England, and had actually taken some steps to procure a dispensation from the Pope to that effect, being misled by the artful conduct of that princess towards his ambassador at London, the Duke of Feria,



Don Carlos himself had contracted, during the lifetime of Mary of England, an alliance with Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II., the son of Francis I. of France ; and, according to some writers, the prince had been so far successful as to gain her affections. But when Elizabeth of England found herself securely seated on her throne, and refused the alliance of Philip, which was one cause of his unfortunate invasion by the Spanish Armada, the King, though knowing well the sentiments of his son, turned his attention towards France, and made overtures to Henry, which were accepted ; and Elizabeth became his third queen. She was espoused at Paris by the Duke of Alva, in the name of his master ; and it was on this occasion that the splendour of the ceremony was defeated by an event fatal and unexpected. Tilts and tournaments were celebrated on the occasion ; and Henry, who was no novice in martial accomplishments, entered the lists to break a lance with the Count de Montgomery, who, at the command of his sovereign, complied with great reluctance. The first encounter was furious on both sides, and the Count's lance having broken against the King's helmet, he attacked Henry with the stump. It was fatal to the King ; a splinter entered his right eye ; the monarch fell to the ground, and was instantly conveyed to his palace, where he soon expired, transmitting his sceptre to the young and feeble Francis II., the husband of Mary Queen of Scotland.

Don Carlos, irritated by jealousy, rejoiced at this calamity, and at first hoped that a sudden turn of affairs would render the marriage of his father nugatory. But the ministers of Francis II., and

his mother Catherine de Medicis, of the House of Guise, insisted on the fulfilment of the treaty, and the Princess Elizabeth was conducted by the King of Navarre to the French frontiers, where she was received by the chief of the Spanish nobility, and a splendid retinue. She was conducted to Toledo, where Philip resided, in which city the marriage was celebrated with royal magnificence ; and a princess, young, beautiful, and amiable, was consigned to the arms of a husband, whose disposition, morose, gloomy, and forbidding, had never known the tender sentiments of domestic life, and who was totally incapable of appreciating her excellence.

Whether there be any truth in the assertion, that Elizabeth, having felt an attachment for Don Carlos, still retained the recollection of her former suitor, which was even heightened by the austerity of her husband, it is impossible, from the mystery which conceals it, positively to say ; it may be truth ; it may be the mere dream of poets and romancers : but if it be truth, he must have begun early in these adventures, as he was then not much more than fourteen years of age. It is agreed, however, that this disappointment, and his father's displeasure, transported him beyond the bounds of prudence ; nor did he attempt to conceal his resentment. The severe government of Philip gradually provoked his subjects, who were no less afraid of his zeal for exterminating the Protestant faith. In no country was this fear more apparent than in the Low Countries, or the Netherlands, which were then under the Crown of Spain. The inhabitants became disgusted with the conduct of Philip during his residence among them, both on

account of their attachment to the reformation of religion, and the continuance of foreign troops in their provinces. Numerous disturbances arose; and Don Carlos, when in his twenty-first year, was intriguing with the malcontents, and was entertaining a design of withdrawing into Flanders, to put himself at their head. The prince had already held secret interviews with the Marquis of Mons and the Baron de Montigny, two noblemen connected with the Low Countries, the object of which was that the prince should assume the government. It would appear that Philip knew something of these intrigues between his son and the malcontents, but he pretended for the present to disregard them. Enraged, however, at the turbulence of the Low Countries, and exasperated against the Prince of Orange, he resolved to send against them a man whose disposition to cruelty was well known, and who, while he possessed the most consummate knowledge of a general, would rule them with a rod of iron.

The Duke of Alva, the inveterate enemy of Don Carlos, was appointed, in 1767, to the government of the Netherlands; and the conduct of the prince on this occasion evidently proves that Alva's appointment frustrated all his ill-concerted plans. So exasperated he was, that when Alva waited upon him to take his leave before his departure, he drew his dagger, and would probably have killed the Duke, had he not been restrained by his attendants, who carried him out of the apartment by force. Alva proceeded to his government, and his arrival spread consternation over the provinces. He established a council, which he called the *Council of Tumults*, but

which rather deserved the epithet which the Flemings bestowed on it, the *Council of Blood*. A series of atrocities followed, which have few parallels in modern history. Some months had hardly elapsed, when upwards of 1800 persons suffered by the hands of the executioner; yet his thirst for blood, and his fury towards the Protestants, were not satisfied. A black catalogue of crimes marks Alva's infamous career in the Low Countries, and rendered him a fit representative of a monarch who could sit unmoved, and behold the lamentable spectacle of an *Auto-da-Fé*.

The Prince of Orange, against whom the hatred of Philip was particularly directed, had foreseen the impending storm, and withdrawn into Germany. Don Carlos, in the mean while, was not idle in the court of Spain; but unfortunately the disaffected in the Low Countries wanted an agent of greater ability and penetration. The marriage of Elizabeth with his father had made little alteration on his sentiments; and it is maintained by many writers, that his conduct roused the jealousy of Philip. As many of the friends of Don Carlos had consulted their safety by a precipitate flight from the Netherlands into Germany, a correspondence was commenced between him and the refugees. Nevertheless, as a pretence, for whether he was sincere or not is doubtful, he became desirous of marrying his cousin, Anne of Austria. To this proposal Philip, though he did not give it a decided negative, evinced no particular anxiety that it should be concluded; and Don Carlos consequently imagined, what indeed was extremely probable, that his father intended

to set aside his succession. He now formed the design of retreating into Germany; and for this purpose wrote to some of the Spanish nobles to aid him in his enterprise.

The designs, however, of Don Carlos, whatever were their nature and importance, were all discovered to Philip by some persons connected with the Court. The projects of this unfortunate prince ought to have awakened emotions of pity in the bosom of his father; but to these Philip was a stranger. He convened the Inquisitors together, who were his chief counsellors, at Madrid; and it was resolved to commence the punishment of the Prince, by depriving him, in the first instance, of his liberty. Don Carlos had, indeed, given previous indications of fear, by keeping a chest of fire-arms in his apartment, and by sleeping with loaded pistols under his pillow. He had also contrived a lock for his apartment of a peculiar construction, by which he might be easily alarmed if any attempt should be made to surprise him. This the King knew, and he was also aware, that Don Carlos would not hesitate to despatch even himself in his own apartment, if he had time to grasp his fire-arms. But, attended by some of the Inquisitors carrying dark lanterns, he effected an entrance into the apartment, while Don Carlos was asleep, and rousing him, he ordered him instantly into custody, reproaching him for his conduct, and telling him that he had come to administer parental chastisement. The unfortunate prince was then arrayed in a mourning habit, though not without great difficulty, for he frequently attempted to kill himself, and even threw

himself into the fire of an apartment into which he was led.

For six months after his arrest, Don Carlos was kept a close prisoner in the hands of the Inquisitors. During this confinement, he became insane. He sometimes fasted for several days, then ate voraciously, and attempted to choke himself by swallowing unchewed victuals. Many intercessions were made for his release by the principal nobility of Spain, but Philip was inexorable. His fate is involved in mystery, and there are different accounts of his death. Some have maintained, that he was strangled, others that he was bled to death; and the friends of Philip have maintained, that he died a natural death, about six months after his imprisonment, having received his father's forgiveness, and the sacrament of the church. But it appears undeniable, that a sentence dictated by Philip himself, and emanating from the Inquisition, terminated the existence of Don Carlos, and that he died by the administration of poison in the month of February 1568.

It is doubtful whether the death of Don Carlos resulted from his father's rage, on account of his turbulence and correspondence with the discontents of the Low Countries, or his jealousy for the alleged intrigue the prince carried on with the Queen. The latter opinion is the favourite theme of romance; but, however much it may have been magnified, it is not improbable, and it is certain the Queen died soon after, not without strong suspicions of being poisoned. That Don Carlos was engaged in a treasonable correspondence, which might have ripened into a formidable conspiracy, there is every reason to believe; but his tragical



fate was more severe than he merited, as his conduct was not distinguished by that caution and prudence which mark the progress of daring and dangerous enterprises. Whatever may be the credit assigned to his fate at the present time, or whatever may be the opinion concerning it, it was currently believed in the reign of Philip; and in the Netherlands, in particular, the voice of the multitude failed not to impeach him for the stern and unnatural sentence. And, after all, the husband of Mary of England, who in a manner sanctioned the cruelties of her short and inglorious reign, the master of the Duke of Alva, who heard the recital of that nobleman's atrocities without one emotion of pity, or expression of disapprobation, can have little claim to generosity or clemency. His viewing the execution of the Protestants by the Inquisition with unconcern, might have been ascribed to superstition; but his cruelty to his son, whose conduct, although unjustifiable, he could have effectually restrained, by keeping him in durance, admitted of a different interpretation. "It was considered by all the world," observes a writer, "as a proof that his heart was dead to the sentiments of natural affection and humanity, and his subjects were everywhere filled with astonishment. It struck terror, in a particular manner, into the inhabitants of the Low Countries, who saw how vain it was to expect mercy from a prince, who had so obstinately refused to exercise it towards his own son, whose only crime, they believed, was his attachment to them, and his compassion for their calamities."



V.

---

THE

GOWRIE CONSPIRACY,

A. D. 1600 ;

INCLUDING

THE RAID OF RUTHVEN,

1582.



THE  
GOWRIE CONSPIRACY.

---

CHAPTER I.

I. THE RAID OF RUTHVEN.

— “ Mere sentinels are kings,  
And at the post of danger more exposed,—  
Shields that between the people and their foes  
Are interposed. ”

MUSGRAVE'S *Ignex de Castro*.

MUCH has been said and written on the Gowrie Conspiracy, which has remained a mystery to the present moment ; nor am I so vain as to presume, though I am so bold as to adventure among the many writers who have discussed the subject, that I shall be able to unfold the mystery, and establish this remarkable event of history in its true and legitimate aspect. But the subject is still interesting ; and something yet remains to be said on it, from certain documents, some of which have been recently published ; at least, I shall endeavour to concentrate the most important facts connected with it, which I shall adduce to establish my own conclusions.

But, in order to understand rightly the nature and objects of this Conspiracy, it is necessary to go farther back into history, than the few years which it immediately preceded. As it is from the assassination of David Rizzio in the presence of the sovereign, that we are to look for all the subsequent murders, factions, and conspiracies, which before the accession of James VI. to the crown of England continually occurred, we may perhaps find the origin even of the Gowrie Conspiracy in that daring insult to the sovereign. The first who stabbed that unfortunate minion, heedless of his cries, the expostulations of Mary, and her delicate situation, was Lord Ruthven, grandfather of the last Earl of Gowrie, who, pale and ghastly, scrupled not to rise from a bed of sickness, to commit a murder in the private apartment of his Queen. After this event, what crimes are not recorded in the Scottish annals ! The murder of Darnley ; the deep-laid schemes and hypocrisy of the Earl of Murray ; the dark intrigues and factious cabals of his minions and associates ; the expulsion of Mary from the throne ; Murray's assassination, the death of the Earl of Mar, Kirkaldy of the Grange, Maitland of Lethington, and the Earl of Morton, not to mention others of lesser note, and other circumstances,—all characterize the age as one of turbulence, crime, and sedition. Add to these the religious disputes which succeeded the Reformation ; the conduct of the Presbyterian ministers ; their arrogance, and their high pretensions ; their being invariably found connected with almost every faction ; their seditious sermons, and their bold denunciations against legitimate authority, not to mention the extravagant powers

which they assumed, and I venture to say, that the annals of few countries present such a dark catalogue of crimes, treason, and sedition, as those of this, at that time poor, and comparatively insignificant, northern kingdom.

At the period when James VI. assumed the reins of government, which was in 1580, Scotland was harassed by various parties whose turbulence originated under the pretence of religion. The three parties into which the nation was soon divided, were the Roman Catholics, whose establishment had been overthrown by the reformers with more zeal than knowledge, inasmuch as it was accompanied by uncalled for ebullitions of fury and devastation; the Protestant Episcopal Church, which the King wished to establish in the room of the ancient ecclesiastics; and the Presbyterian preachers, whose theology and notions on church-government were imported from the school of Geneva, and who had established themselves. The first party prevailed greatly in the northern counties, under the especial influence of the Earl of Huntly, and other powerful chiefs; the second prevailed also in the north, and to a limited extent, among the inhabitants of the Lowland counties, being supported by the court, a considerable number of the nobles, the landholders or *lairds*, and many of the well informed of the middle classes; the third, and the most numerous, was supported almost exclusively by the inferior and lowest ranks, aided by a few of the nobles, some of whom adhered to it more from policy than principle. To the honour of the ancient church, it must be remarked, that, after its final annihilation in 1567, few insurrections of any note are recorded, and its adherents

were chiefly active during the lifetime of the unfortunate Mary, to whom they were attached, as much from the principles of respect due to legitimate authority, as from congeniality in religion, being frequently aided and encouraged by various of the reformed peers, who joined or opposed the Queen's party, as the occasion suited their affairs. But the murder of Mary at Fotheringay annihilated their hopes, and ended the association. The Protestant Church, on the other hand, being sanctioned by the State, having no occasion to be turbulent, existed peaceably, through much suffering and insult from the third party, the Presbyterian preachers, headed by Andrew Melville, who, animated with the most inveterate hatred to whatever savoured not of the Calvinistic polity, as if truth had taken up her abode nowhere else but in a single city of Switzerland, thundered their anathemas from the pulpit against the King, the court, and all those who favoured not their party; as if real religion was to be found only among them, and nothing but heathenism among their opponents, alarming the people by fierce declamations respecting their national liberty, interpreting every measure of the government into an act of tyranny and oppression, and teaching them that the church of the great, and learned, and enlightened English nation, was as heretical and erroneous as that of Rome.

It will thus be seen, that I connect the Gowrie Conspiracy in some degree with religion; and this I shall endeavour to prove as I proceed. Inflamed by this spirit, and animated by these resentments, rendered more furious by grievances real or imaginary, the supporters of this last party, having



contrived to take along with them the rabble, were a most formidable faction. The bold pretensions of the ministers, who, being in possession of the pulpits, had excellent opportunities for inculcating their favourite opinions, which they hardly if ever failed to improve, and the influence which they contrived to establish over the people, were admirable auxiliaries in the hands of a party whose safety depended on popular clamour. As the Presbyterian ministers had been always the mortal enemies of Mary, whose very religion was crime enough in their eyes, the assassination of David Rizzio, or "Signior Davie," as they termed him, was applauded by them as a noble act;\* and they scrupled not to give countenance to the malicious report, which is unblushingly maintained by one of their great champions, Buchanan, and darkly

\* That John Knox was privy to this assassination can hardly be doubted. When James VI., on one occasion, censured Knox's memory for approving of that atrocious act, a minister replied, "that the slaughter of David, so far as it was the work of God, was allowed by Mr Knox, and not otherwise." Calderwood MS., quoted by Dr M'Crie, *Life of Knox*, p. 309. We need not be surprised at this, for Knox had previously exulted in the murder of Cardinal Beaton, and actually sanctioned it, by afterwards joining the murderers. With respect to Rizzio's murder, which no sound-thinking person can ever justify, and Knox's share in it, I presume the reader will peruse the following set-off by Dr M'Crie with considerable surprise, narrated by the reverend author quite in the spirit of Knox, as if it were a second *godly fact*. "There is no reason," says he, "to think that he (Knox) was privy to the conspiracy that proved fatal to Rizzio. *But it is probable that he expressed his satisfaction at an event which contributed to the safety of religion and the commonwealth, if not also his approbation of the conduct of the conspirators!*"

alluded to by John Knox, that Rizzio had unlawful intercourse with Mary. The authors of that atrocity were invariably extolled ; and Lord Ruthven, who died in exile at Newcastle, was held as a *godly professing* nobleman. This peer, who has found a place among Walpole's " Royal and Noble Authors," for having written a narrative of Rizzio's murder, in which there is not one expression of regret, or the least symptom of repentance, for a crime as dishonourable as it was barbarous, was succeeded, in 1566, by his second son William, fourth Lord Ruthven, and first Earl of Gowrie, who having married Dorothea, second daughter of Henry Steuart, Lord Methven, became not very remotely connected with the royal family. \* He had been actively engaged with his father in the association against Rizzio, and had fled with him into England ; but he found means to procure a pardon from Mary, through the interposition of the Earl of Morton, and returned to Scotland. Having thus had an example of faction and insult to his sovereign set before him in his earliest years, and being indeed connected with it, his future life, till his execution at Stirling, may be easily explained. He early connected himself, moreover, with the Presbyterian ministers, who

\* The first Earl of Gowrie was, however, connected with the royal family without that alliance. His grandfather, William, second Lord Ruthven, married Janet Haliburton, eldest daughter and coheirress of Patrick Lord Haliburton of Dirleton, in East-Lothian, by which he obtained that barony. This lady was of royal extraction, as Lord Haliburton's ancestor, Sir Walter Haliburton, married Lady Isabel Stuart, eldest daughter of Robert Duke of Albany, Regent of Scotland, and third son of King Robert II.

appear to have looked upon it as a part of their privilege to insult the government, and who invariably expressed themselves in a manner not very courteous towards every one who was presumptuous enough to differ from them. The rank and influence of the family of Gowrie rendered their accession to that party a matter of no small importance; and, before the affair which is the subject of these pages took place, the House of Gowrie had been held as the acknowledged leaders of James' enemies and opposers. As the first Earl of Gowrie, or, to speak properly, Lord Ruthven (for he had not then been raised to the earldom), had begun early in life to oppose the government, of which his father had set before him no inconsiderable example, he repaid Mary's generosity in recalling him from exile and granting him a pardon, by the basest ingratitude, and was actually one of those who waited on her in the Castle of Lochleven, in which she had been imprisoned by Murray's faction, where they compelled her, after behaving with the greatest rudeness and indecency, to sign her abdication, by threatenings which professed to affect her life.\* Thus united with the party who, to accomplish Murray's schemes, had openly insulted their royal mistress, Ruthven was appointed Treasurer of Scotland for life in 1571, and an Extraordinary Lord of Session in 1578. By his smooth address,

\* The Author of Waverley makes Mary thus address Lord Ruthven on that occasion, after she had encountered the indecent rudeness and blunt usage of Lord Lindsay, with whom she contrasted him, "Farewell, my Lord of Ruthven, the *smoother but the deeper traitor*."—ABBOT.

and the share which he had in procuring the condemnation of the Earl of Morton, he insinuated himself into the favour of James after he assumed the government; and accordingly, in the Parliament of 1580, he was created Earl of Gowrie; and the barony of Gowrie, which formerly belonged to the monastery of Scone, was erected into an earldom by royal charter, dated 20th of October that same year. †

Gowrie, thus owing his elevation to the turbulence of the times, and to the zeal which he manifested for the popular party of religionists, to-wit, the preachers, was henceforth their acknowledged leader, one of their “godly professors,” and defenders of what they rather singularly, yet gravely, termed the “Universal Kirk of Scotland.” The characteristic features of the “professors” of that period were rather peculiar; and though they had departed from Rome, they nevertheless afforded a striking illustration of the adage, that extremes frequently effect a collision. The Roman Pontiff claimed the supremacy over temporal sovereigns as universal Bishop; in like manner, the Presbyterian of the “Universal Kirk” stoutly denied that he had any dependence upon them, and placed the head of his Church whom he chose at a very convenient distance. As in the days of the ancient ecclesiastical splendour and power, it was declared that no churchman could be summoned before a lay tribunal; in like manner, the Presbyterians of Scotland at this period maintained, that their doctrines and opinions were cognizable only by a court composed of themselves,

\* Douglas' Peerage, folio, vol. i. apud Earls of Gowrie.

called the *Presbytery*, and that were even treason or sedition taught from the pulpit, the civil power could in no case decide upon it, till it was discussed in the said *Presbytery*, of which, it must be recollected, the supposed preacher of treason or sedition was a member, and not likely to be the first person who would admit his errors.\* Nay, the Presbyterian ministers of that period went so far as to maintain, that their General Assembly was superior to the Parliament—that no acts ought to be passed without their previous consultation, deliberation, and concurrence; and they have been known to set aside acts of Parliament, and to have declared them of no effect, when these acts were displeasing to their fancies.† The analogies between some of the leading features of Popery, and the opinions of the ministers in the reign of James VI., might be carried farther; but enough has been said to show the nature of their practices and opinions. It is necessary merely to keep in view, what cannot be denied, that they invariably opposed the sovereign, and construed his every act, whether trifling or important, into a measure of tyranny, an attack on their liberties, and that, too, accompanied frequently by conduct not in remarkable harmony with their office as ministers of a religion of peace.

An *imperium in imperio* of the above description was not likely, from its bold and extravagant pretensions, to be the promoter of harmony and civil order. Accordingly, in 1582, a new de-

\* For these and other remarkable illustrations, the reader may consult Calderwood, pp. 103, 110, 144, 193–196. Spottiswoode, pp. 316, 317, 318, 222, 323.

† James VI. Parl. 12. cap. 114.

fiance of the royal power connected with the Gowrie family, and in which the ministers, by their subsequent conduct, evinced that they were deeply interested, took place. It was in this year that a confederacy was formed among certain of the most influential persons of the nobility, attached, or pretending to be attached, to the Presbyterian interest, the supporters of which were beginning to perceive that the King was by no means so zealous in behalf of that system of ecclesiastical polity as they had at first anticipated. The leaders in this conspiracy were the Earls of Gowrie, Mar, Athol, Rothes, and Glencairn, Lords Lindsay, the Master of Glamis, the Abbots of Dryburgh, Cambuskenneth, and Paisley, \* with others of their friends.† In concert with these were the chief Presbyterian ministers, at the head of whom was the celebrated Andrew Melville.‡

While the motives which induced this formidable faction to coalesce, were simply the lessening of the regal power to exalt their own, many circumstances occurred which were likely to render an enterprise successful. The inclination of

\* Or commendators, for they were laymen, having seized the temporalities of these abbeys at the Reformation. To the above may be added the Abbot or Commendator of Dunfermline and the Prior of Pittenweem. *Historie of King James the Sext*, 4to, Edinburgh, 1825, p. 189. Printed by the Bannatyne Club.

† In the sentence of forfeiture there appears, in addition, Lords Oliphant and Boyd, the Lairds of Lochleven, Cleish, and Easter Wemyss, the Lord Justice Clerk Belenden, and the Constable of Dundee. There are also two noble ladies, the *Countess of Gowrie*, and the Countess of Cassillis.

‡ *Historie of King James the Sext*, *ut sup.* p. 186.



James for favourites had been early manifested, and at this period he had two, who mortally hated each other, Esme Stuart, Duke of Lennox, and cousin-german of James' father, and James Stewart, Earl of Arran, who, by a series of intrigues, and even crimes, had been elevated to that dignity at the expense of the House of Hamilton, which had been by him unjustly deprived of that earldom. The former, who has been most deservedly described by Dr Robertson as gentle, humane, and candid,\* the only amiable favourite whom James ever adopted, was eventually driven from Scotland by a faction who pretended to believe him a Papist and an emissary of Rome; the latter is described as being of "a prowd and arrogant mynd, and thocht na man to be his equal." The disputes between those two noblemen, at first resulting from private jealousy, became at length public, and were productive of innumerable feuds. While Lennox was supported by the court party, Arran contrived to interest the Presbyterian ministers in his quarrel, by affecting an outrageous zeal against Popery, and by opposing the King's measures with regard to the government of the church, to which they had an invincible hatred. It must be here observed, that the period of the Reformation in Scotland was the *period of crimes*†—that conspiracy followed conspiracy in quick succession,—which must invariably be the case, when any great and essential change in a state is effected by the mob.

The *Raid of Ruthven* thus partly originated

\* History of Scotland, 4to edit. vol. ii. p. 70—94.

† Caledonia, vol. iv. p. 858.

from two causes ; the private quarrel of Lennox and Arran, and the intrigues of the ministers. A circumstance, illustrative of the latter, occurred at this time, which induced the ministers more readily to co-operate in exciting a popular ferment. After the death of John Douglas, the first Protestant Archbishop of St Andrew's, Patrick Adamson, a scholar and a poet, had been appointed to the primacy. As he would not submit to the General Assembly, he was most violently denounced by Andrew Melville, and almost all the ministers. The clamour which they excited, however, and the fear of the excommunication they threatened, induced Adamson to tender them a kind of submission not very consonant to his dignity. But this did not satisfy them. They summoned him before them, industriously propagated a report, that he had consulted the devil for the recovery of his health ; and were the means of procuring an old woman, named Alison Pearson, to be imprisoned, and afterwards burnt as a witch, for recommending to the Archbishop some simple medicines, not of the most palatable kind, in his illness. \*

\* This fact is narrated with great gravity by Calderwood, (p. 140.) It appears from his account, that Alison Pearson made her escape from prison, by the aid of the Archbishop ; but such were the tender mercies of the " Presbiterie," that she was apprehended four years afterwards, and actually executed on the Castlehill of Edinburgh, being " wirreit at anc staik " and " briut in assis." The trial is given in the First Part of Mr Pitcairn's Criminal Trials before the Court of Justiciary in Scotland ; and Alison's alleged cure of the Archbishop gave rise to the satire entitled, " The Legend of the Bishop of St Androis," where his Grace's trafficking with witches is recorded with the keenest hatred. It is, however, a very contemptible production.

As Lennox advised James to support the Archbishop, and to oppose the “newly erectit societie of ministers callit the Presbiterie,”\* he became no less odious to them than to Arran; and as the “Presbiterie” had the ear of the people, the conduct of the ministers of Edinburgh being imitated by the inferior grade in the country parishes, they were found to be most important auxiliaries in Arran’s practices. There was, however, another case somewhat similar to Archbishop Adamson’s, in which Lennox was more immediately concerned, and which fomented the popular outcry against him. The See of Glasgow had been vacant since the flight of Archbishop James Beaton to Paris, who had refused to accede to the Reformation. Lennox’s friends conceived, that if an Archbishop were to be appointed in the Duke’s interest, it would be a good opportunity for him to obtain an influence in that city, as Glasgow was dependent on the Archbishop, he being *ex officio* lord of the regality. Accordingly, Robert Montgomery was induced to accept it, in a manner not very honourable either to his patron or himself. He promised to cede to Lennox all the lands and revenues belonging to the See, and to content himself with 500*l.* Scots (about 70*l.* Sterling), and some trifling immunities.† Montgomery, unfortunately for himself, had formerly been a keen opponent of Episcopacy; and as his conduct was viewed by his quondam friends as a flagrant apostasy, they proceeded more rigorously against him than against Adamson. It is a

\* Historie of King James the Sext, ut sup. p. 186.

† Spottiswoode, however, says that the sum was 1000*l.* Scots, about 140*l.* sterling. History, p. 316.

curious circumstance, however, that in the various altercations which ensued on the subject, they omitted altogether the most important matter—namely, the simoniacal contract, to which charge Montgomery had certainly rendered himself liable; and it is probable, that had they managed the affair in a moderate manner, and founded their opposition on that circumstance, it might have terminated very differently. But, on the contrary, they drew up a sort of very *modest* charge against the Archbishop, to the following effect,—that he had maintained, in a sermon at Stirling, that women were circumcised in the forehead—that he had called the Presbyterian ministers men of *curious brains*—that he had disdainfully asked in what passage of Scripture they found a bishop for a thousand pounds, horse, corn, poultry, &c.—that he had termed the ministers *lovers of sedition*, and said that they ought to wear crowns—that he termed the ministers *liars, backbiters, and writers of infamous libels*. While the process against the Archbishop was depending, James more than once threatened Melville, and his “newlie erectit societie callit the Presbiterie,” with the pains and penalties of treason; but Montgomery was nevertheless found guilty of unsound doctrine, dissoluteness of life, contempt of the church’s sentence, falsehood, lying, perjury, inciting to sedition; and was ordered to be cast out of the church, under the sentence of excommunication.

These rigorous proceedings somewhat intimidated the Archbishop, and he endeavoured to make his peace with his enemies by professing to submit to their authority, and to have no farther connexion with the See of Glasgow. Finding,

however, that this submission had displeased the King, he retracted it, and proceeded to Glasgow to take possession of the See. On the 8th of March 1582, the Archbishop entered the cathedral, and seeing a minister in the pulpit, he ordered him out. The preacher replied, that he was placed there by the Kirk, and refused to come down; whereupon he was forcibly ejected, and even buffeted by the followers of the Laird of Minto. Another minister named Howison, who pretended to be moderator of the Presbytery, was imprisoned by the Provost of Glasgow, being forcibly pulled out of the chair, for certain seditious speeches which he was holding forth.

The ministers and their adherents were now sufficiently exasperated. They ordered a fast to be observed throughout the nation; the pulpits resounded with invectives against the Duke of Lennox; and Balcanqual, one of the preachers, publicly gave out this significant threat in a sermon at Edinburgh, that "if his Grace continued in opposing himself to God and his word, he would come to little grace in the end." Montgomery was modestly found guilty of "heresy, popery, common blasphemy, adultery, incest, fornication, slaughter, theft, common oppression, common drunkenness, usury, non-residence, absence from his kirk," &c.\* was at length actually excommunicated with anathemas and denunciations, and finally delivered over to the devil by a man named Davidson.

The King was somewhat startled at their opposition, but not so the Duke of Lennox. He still continued to entertain the Archbishop, which gave

\* Calderwood, p. 124.

mortal offence to his enemies. Having deputed two of their number to intimate to the Duke the prelate's excommunication, as also the penalties which those incurred who kept company with excommunicated persons, Lennox fiercely asked them, whether the King or they were to be superiors; and also gave them to understand, that the Archbishop was entertained by him at the King's command, and he would continue to do so while he pleased, in defiance of their censures. The King had also declared the excommunication illegal; and a list of grievances was agreed upon by the ministers, which they resolved to present to James himself in September 1582.

But various proceedings in the interval, which fall now to be recorded, materially altered the aspect of affairs. Arran, Lennox's mortal enemy, observed with exultation that James was intimidated by this opposition; and he resolved not to lose the opportunity to rid himself and his own associates of a rival. Being sure of the support of the ministers, who were ready to engage in any conspiracy against their sovereign and the Duke, Arran pretended great submission to James, and offered to resign his office as Captain of the Guard, which, being accepted, was, to his infinite mortification, bestowed on Lennox. He then craved permission to retire from court, which was also granted; with the stipulation, however, that he should fix his residence in the metropolis.

All this tended to exasperate Arran and his friends; but their policy induced them to submit to these things with seeming acquiescence. But this pretended compliance was merely a covert to their designs. A powerful confederacy was form-



ed, which had for its pretended object, the defence of the religion and the liberties of the kingdom, but, in reality, to procure the ruin of Lennox, and possession of the King's person. This confederacy was not managed with so great caution, as to preclude it from reaching the ears of the Duke; but an apparent reconciliation, which was effected between him and Arran, tended to throw him off his guard, while the confederacy in secret was equally opposed to Arran, whose ruin was also meditated by some of its members, after they had accomplished that of Lennox. The hunting-season was advancing, when James prepared himself to participate in a sport of which he was passionately fond. For this purpose, he proceeded to Athol, leaving his two rival favourites at their respective residences; Lennox at Dalkeith, in Mid-Lothian, and Arran at Kinneil, near Borrowstounness, in Linlithgowshire; and accompanied only by two noblemen, the Earls of Athol and Gowrie. The district of Athol at that period possessed peculiar attractions to those devoted to the pastimes of the chase; and the numerous clansmen of the chief frequently graced the retinue of the Scottish sovereigns, when they visited those sequestered districts. Thither the young monarch proceeded, to forget for a while the feuds of his factious and turbulent subjects.

It was at this season that the confederates resolved to commence their operations against both the favourites of the King. The inclinations of James were in favour of Lennox, whose mildness of disposition and urbanity of manners had rendered him exceedingly popular with all save Arran, the Presbyterian preachers, and their admirers



among the rabble. The popular party was at this time engaged in a treasonable correspondence with Elizabeth, and it was soon industriously circulated by them that Lennox was a Papist, and in league with the Duke of Guise, simply because he happened to be a Frenchman by birth. In the execution of his office, moreover, as Lord Chamberlain, an office which had been suffered to fall into desuetude, he found the proprietors of lands strongly disposed to dispute their feudal tenures, which made him exact the duties with the utmost rigour; and thus, though he did no more than he was warranted by law, he raised up against himself a number of enemies. The boroughs were also under the jurisdiction of the chamberlain, and the proceedings of Lennox were by no means popular with those who managed their affairs, inasmuch as he had resolved to revive that jurisdiction, which the carelessness of his predecessors had caused them to neglect.

But, however much Lennox erred in his public proceedings, and however falsely he was slandered by a faction who affected to believe him a Papist, and in the interest of the unfortunate Mary, his errors were those of the head, not of the heart, as being a man too easily counselled by ambitious and designing adventurers. It was not so with the Earl of Arran, whose infamy the page of history has faithfully recorded. This nobleman was Captain James Stewart, son of Lord Ochiltree, who, in 1581, had accused and brought to the block the Regent Morton, as being concerned in the murder of Darnley. Having thus commenced his career in blood, it was not to be expected that

he would be too scrupulous as to principle. With great dexterity he procured the guardianship of the young Earl of Arran, who, from repeated mortifications and disappointments, had become deranged. No sooner had Stewart obtained possession of that young nobleman, at one time beloved by the Reformers, than he seized his estates, assumed his title, and kept his ward in custody, where he was treated with barbarous cruelty. Being as cunning as he was unprincipled, he had the address to insinuate himself into the favour of the King, whose juvenile passions he flattered and humoured, and whose mind he endeavoured to poison by debauchery and dissipation. While he was entertained at the house of the Earl of March, the King's grand-uncle, he scrupled not, in open defiance of the laws of honour, gratitude, and hospitality, to seduce the wife of his benefactor, a lady young and beautiful, but of the most violent and profligate passions. Impatient of restraint in their guilty connection, and wishing to legitimatise the offspring of their adulterous commerce, the lady, by the advice of Arran, petitioned to be divorced from her husband on grounds which no modest woman would ever plead in a court of justice. By the influence of Arran she was successful;—a sentence of divorce was passed, which was instantly followed by marriage with her paramour. Nay, so utterly unprincipled was this man, that when the King, then only sixteen years of age, was at his seat of Kinneil, he carried his sister in his arms by force, and undressed, into the King's apartment, and told his sovereign to use her in the devil's name. Such was the man who industrious-

ly fomented the report that Lennox was a Papist, who affected to regard the Protestant religion in danger, and with whom the Presbyterian ministers hesitated not at times to act, in their zeal to establish their favourite system of church-government.

But Arran, as well as Lennox, was viewed with hatred by the confederacy, though not with the same feelings, inasmuch as the French connections of the latter operated powerfully against him. The confederacy, as has been observed at the outset, consisted of the Earls of Gowrie, Mar, Glencairn, Athol, and Rothes, Lords Lindsay, Boyd, Oliphant, the Master of Glamis, the Lairds of Lochleven, Cleish, Easter Wemyss, with several other barons and gentlemen of distinction. The King proceeded to Athol; and, after having enjoyed his pastime, prepared to return to the metropolis with a small number of attendants. He accordingly left the forest of Athol, and, on the 22d of August 1582, was proceeding on his journey southwards, when he was invited by Gowrie to Ruthven Castle, which lay in his way.\* James accepted the invitation, little conceiving that there was any design against him, though, when he entered the Castle, he felt some uneasiness at the multitude of strangers. This alarm, however, he thought it prudent to conceal, although he had sufficient grounds for alarm, as his own attendants were few, and as the retainers of the confederated nobles were armed, to the number of 1000 and upwards, and dispersed through-

\* Now called Hunting Tower Castle, and belonging to the Duke of Athol. It is in the parish of Tippermuir, Perthshire, and consists of two ancient square towers, connected by buildings of a more recent date.

out the neighbourhood. During the night, no indication of violence appeared; but on the following morning, when the King summoned his attendants, and was about to leave the apartment, the Master of Glamis appeared at the door, and told him that he must stay. Though the King's fears had now increased, he nevertheless appeared to be at ease, and inquired at the Master the reason of his interruption. He was told in reply that he would know it soon. The associated Lords then appeared, and presented a remonstrance against Lennox and Arran, which James received with the complaisance necessary in his situation. Still he was impatient to be gone, and made an effort to leave the room, but was rudely prevented. Finding himself a prisoner, he expostulated, entreated, and threatened; and at last, finding no chance of escape, he burst into tears. The Master of Glamis, however, fiercely exclaimed to his companions, "No matter for his tears: better children weep than bearded men." This exclamation made an impression on James, which he never afterwards forgot or forgave. They immediately placed the King under severe restraint; dismissed all his followers, whom they impeached, and allowed no one to have access to him but those of their own party.

This exploit was soon noised abroad; and on the following day, Arran and his brother set out for Ruthven with about forty horsemen, to escort the King to Edinburgh. He depended much on the friendship of the Earl of Gowrie, to whom he was allied, and who had co-operated with him in the prosecution of the Regent Morton. He had accordingly with his party proceeded as far as

Duplin, where he separated from his followers, and with two attendants proceeded to the Castle of Ruthven, charging his brother to keep the highway with the rest. Arran arrived at the gate, and demanded admission to the King; but the wrath of the conspirators arose to such a pitch, at the sight of a man who was now odious, that instant death would have been the penalty of his rashness, had not the friendship of Gowrie intervened. He was sent a prisoner to Stirling Castle. His followers, under the command of his brother, were attacked by the Earl of Mar with a superior force. They were soon routed; his brother was taken prisoner, severely wounded, and sent to the Castle of Duplin.

For six days the King was kept in close confinement, but treated, nevertheless, with respect. Lennox, in the mean time, was not idle. He despatched some noblemen in his interest to inquire into the condition of the King, and to ascertain whether or not he was detained against his will; for if so, as was strongly rumoured, he would endeavour to set him free. They were not permitted, however, to see the King, except in presence of the associated nobles; and when they had expressed their opinions, James immediately exclaimed that he was a prisoner, which he desired them to proclaim to all his subjects, hoping that the Duke would exert himself to effect his rescue. The ringleaders denied that he was a captive; and after expressing an invective against both Lennox and Arran, declared to the noblemen sent by the former, that they were resolved to persist in their course at the hazard of their lives and fortunes;

and with this declaration, they forcibly ejected the messengers of Lennox from the Castle.

When the news of this exploit reached the metropolis, nothing could exceed the consternation of the public mind. In Edinburgh the influence of Lennox was considerable, and he made himself particularly active by his endeavours to excite the citizens. The conspirators, however, the day after his captivity, suffered James to proceed to Perth, in order to preserve appearances, but vigilantly guarded by their own associates. James now found it necessary to yield to circumstances. The remonstrance which the ringleaders had presented, abounded with the most furious invectives against the two favourites, the Archbishop of Glasgow, the Bishop of Ross, and various others who were attached to the unfortunate Mary. Thus situated, and more apprehensive for the safety of Lennox than for his own, he agreed to issue an extorted proclamation, setting forth, that his residence at Perth was his own free choice, and commanding all associations which had been formed for his rescue to dissolve within six hours from the date of the proclamation, under the penalties of treason. This proclamation bore date the 28th of August, the eighth day after the capture of the King. Lennox was by this time at the head of a considerable force; and we are also informed by Sir James Balfour, that another association was formed to liberate the King, consisting of the Earls of Huntly, Crawford, Argyle, Montrose, Marischall, Sutherland, and Caithness, Lords Home, Seton, Ogilvy, Maxwell, Herries, Sinclair, Livingstone, and Newbottle, with all the gentlemen of Merse and Lothian. Whe-



ther or not those noblemen coalesced with Lennox, it is impossible to say ; but it is probable that he would have paid little attention to the proclamation, as he knew that the King was a prisoner, and that it had been extorted from him by force, had he not received a private letter from the King, exhorting him to leave the kingdom before the 20th of September. This letter he communicated to his friends, who advised him in the mean time to retire to Dunbarton, where they would afterwards deliberate whether he should depart for France, or attempt the rescue of the King. At Dunbarton, however, so many noblemen and others espoused his cause, that the confederates took the alarm, and procured an order from James, commanding all the Duke's attendants, with the exception of forty, to depart from Dunbarton within twelve hours after notice, and to desist from approaching the Duke's residence while he was in Scotland. Lennox lost all hope after this intimation, and sent Lord Herries with two gentlemen to demand assurance of his own safety, if he complied with that order. After mature deliberation, his enemies sent him a peremptory order ; \* and while Lennox was considering it, Arran was examined in prison, but the result was not made known. George Douglas, also, the same who had aided Mary in her escape from Lochleven, was arrested at Stirling, and examined concerning the intended plot to associate Mary with the King in the government. He confessed that he had heard the report, but denied that he had concern in it, nor could he inform them who were its contrivers.

\* Moyes, p. 64, 65.



Gowrie and the noblemen who detained the King began to discover, that all their pretended representations about the public good had no effect in quieting the uneasiness of the people. He was accordingly brought to Edinburgh; and his reception, on entering the city, was highly characteristic and picturesque. James was met by the Presbyterian ministers, who formed part of the procession, and proceeded along the streets, singing the 124th Psalm, beginning, "Now Israel may say," &c. \* A convention of the Estates was called, which of course consisted solely of the associated peers. The ministers loudly extolled the detention of the King; they passed an act of their assembly, declaring the conspirators "to have done good and acceptable service to God;" and threatening those with excommunication who opposed the *good cause*. The act of their assembly they caused to be read in all the churches of the kingdom, "to the offence," observes Spottiswoode, "of many good men, who were grieved to see a bad cause thus coloured and defended."

The plans of the conspirators were successful with regard to Lennox. Arran was set at liberty, and compelled to reside northward of the river Spey, but Lennox was commanded to leave the kingdom. As to the Duke, he continued to lurk about Blackness, Dunbarton, Callender, and other places, where he could find shelter, still hoping that circumstances might occur which would cause an alteration in his affairs. But the hatred of his enemies was implacable. Though often destitute of the common necessities of life, and even of clothing, he was

\* Spottiswoode, p. 322.

reluctant to depart from the kingdom without taking leave of his sovereign. This was denied him; and he at length departed for France, where he died on the 29th of May the following year, of a broken heart, as was reported, but not without strong suspicions of being poisoned. James lamented his death sincerely, and ever afterwards showed kindness to his children. A few hours before his death, which happened at Paris, some priests came to him to administer the last rites of the Romish Church, but he would not admit them, and declared that he would die in the faith of the Church of Scotland. This fact was publicly made known by James, that the people might see the injury he had sustained by his enemies during his residence in Scotland.

An ambassador, in the meantime, from Elizabeth, at whose instance, indeed, the whole business had been conducted, procured the recall of the Earl of Angus, who had been exiled for his turbulence, and forfeited in the Parliament of 1581. In the beginning of December, Arran so far set at nought his restraint as to have a meeting with the Earls of Crawford, Athol, and Montrose, after which the Court was daily distracted by rumours of conspiracies and intended assassinations. The King was still as much a prisoner as he had been when in the Castle of Ruthven; and he was doomed to repeated mortifications and insults from the ministers and their adherents. Two ambassadors, who came from France to negotiate with James respecting his mother's affairs, and to remonstrate with the confederates on the King's imprisonment, were publicly insulted by them. Their sermons abounded with declamations against

them : they were termed *ambassadors of the bloody murderer*, meaning the Duke of Guise, who, they maintained, had caused them to be sent hither. One of them happened to be a knight of the Holy Ghost ; and, consequently, the white cross of the order which he wore was pronounced to be the *badge of Antichrist*. The ambassadors pitied a monarch whose life was embittered by those men ; and seeing all hope of a negotiation vain, they petitioned for their dismissal, to return to France. This was granted ; but the King, wishing to treat them with some respect, on account of the alliance which had formerly existed between France and Scotland, made arrangements with the magistrates of Edinburgh to give them an entertainment before their departure. This also gave offence to the ministers ; and, in order to frustrate it, they proclaimed a solemn fast to be held on the very day of the festival. On that day, in order to detain the people in the church, three of them successively preached sermons in St Giles' Church, the object of which was to excite the rabble to fall on the ambassadors ; and their curses were more than ordinarily vehement against the magistrates and the nobility who waited on the foreigners. Nor was this all ; it was with the utmost difficulty that the ministers, after the ambassadors had departed, were restrained from excommunicating the magistrates for not observing their fast, which, from the motives by which it was proclaimed, was in reality an insult to Heaven, and treason against the King, they having no authority to institute any such observances.

The King was obliged to submit to these and innumerable other insults in silence, and thus the

faction soon became emboldened to take greater liberties with the royal power. They scrupled not to set aside acts of Parliament which did not coincide with their wishes ; and they actually enacted laws in their illegal assemblies, which being, as they pretended, enacted in the name, and by the authority of Christ, the head of the Church, were not only binding on all the estates of the kingdom, but were to be implicitly obeyed under the penalty of excommunication. But James was determined to endure the bondage no longer than was necessary ; and various circumstances occurred which induced him to watch for a sufficient opportunity. The principal object of alarm with the associated Lords, was the fear that negotiations would yet be concluded to secure the crown to Mary in conjunction with the King. Yet, though they guarded James most sedulously night and day, they could not prevent the access of certain noblemen to the King, who hated the association, and to whom James spoke without reserve, informing them that he was resolved to hazard every thing to recover his freedom. The return of two ambassadors from England, the one making a report different from the other, made James more anxious than ever to obtain his deliverance. As the confederated Lords were in league with Elizabeth, whom they secretly assured, by one of the above ambassadors, that they would never consent to the association of Mary with James in the government, an assurance which was highly gratifying to the English Queen, they feared that, if James regained his liberty, his filial regard would stimulate him to exertions in the cause of his mother. It was their interest, therefore, to

keep James under restraint, until Elizabeth was able to accomplish her designs ; and the King was thus compelled to coincide with what, through their machinations, he could not otherwise avoid.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that this was one of the intentions of those who contrived the Raid of Ruthven. Whether or not they knew the catastrophe which was destined for Mary, it was evidently their design to render the King powerless and inefficient, by endeavouring to effect the ruin of all those noblemen who were inclined to pity the unfortunate Queen, and by stimulating the senseless and furious preachers to excite the vulgar who attended them in shoals, that they might secure adherents among the nobles. James knew all this well, and, as the report of Lennox's death had been clearly ascertained, conceiving that they were now freed from a dangerous enemy, they guarded the King with less care than when they were daily under apprehensions that the Duke would suddenly return. As for Arran, he was so universally obnoxious, that he caused little uneasiness. The King was accordingly enabled to arrange a plan for his escape with the Earls of Argyle, Marischall, Rothes, and Montrose, and he appointed a convention of the estates, to be held at St Andrew's in May 1583, to which these noblemen were specially summoned. Few of the confederated nobles were then at court ; and James, in the meanwhile, left Edinburgh, with the intention of making a journey through Fife and the neighbouring counties, before the meeting of the convention. He first proceeded to the palace of Falkland, where he communicated his plan of escape to William Stewart, Captain of the Guard,

and received the hearty co-operation of that officer. It was arranged, that the King should set out for St Andrew's, under the pretence of paying his uncle, the Earl of March, a visit, while the noblemen, who were privy to the King's plans, were to take up their residence in the castle of that city. A few days before the convention met, the King left Falkland, and he was joined at Dairsie in his progress by some barons who were opposed to the confederacy. Exulting at his escape, James amused himself with hawking by the way; and he arrived at St Andrew's without interruption. Yet his joy at having regained his liberty seems to have been imprudently expressed, and almost to have thrown him off his guard; for he slept the first night in one of the inns of St Andrew's, where he had little protection from surprise by his late keepers. Next day, James entered the Castle of St Andrew's, where he was attended by the Earls of Marischall, Montrose, and other noblemen. The gates were ordered to be shut, and Stewart, the Captain of the Guard, was intrusted with the command. A new privy council was appointed; and the Earl of Gowrie, although the most active of those concerned in the Raid of Ruthven, contrived to be admitted into favour. This was done at the intercession of Stewart, though not without great difficulty. Gowrie was compelled to ask pardon on his knees, and humbly to profess his sorrow for the share he had sustained in the capture of the King. Even Arran, though at first also refused, was permitted to come to Court; and we shall afterwards see the share he took in public affairs.

It was not to be expected that the King would



allow this bold exploit to pass unnoticed ; nor yet was Arran inclined to look with friendly feelings on those who had attempted to ruin him with the King. Yet few princes in James' situation, considering the insults and provocations he had received, could have behaved with greater clemency and wisdom than he did on this occasion. He published a declaration, in which he expressed how sensible he was of the treasonable attempt on his person at Ruthven ; yet, willing to forgive all past offences, if the actors in, and defenders of that exploit, would show themselves penitent, crave pardon in due time, and not provoke him by any farther unlawful actions, to remember that treasonable attempt. This proclamation, however, had little effect. Arran was determined to revenge himself on his enemies, who were both numerous and powerful, and he contrived to accompany this act of indemnity by certain conditions, which, in effect, defeated the ends of the proclamation. As they expected little good, therefore, from Arran, they scrupled not to set at nought the declaration, and to employ themselves in making the best provision they could for their own safety. The most turbulent of them were accordingly confined to various places throughout the country ; but as they chose also to disobey the charge, with the exception of the Earl of Angus, they were denounced as rebels, and proclamations issued against them. Various other proclamations followed, which were sufficiently severe. The convention which assembled at Perth made it a capital crime for any one to deny that the Duke of Lennox had not died a sincere Protestant. A second decree recapitulated all



the circumstances attending the seizure and detention of the King's person at Ruthven ; and a third, which was levelled against the nobility who had disregarded the first proclamation and indemnity, ordered all loyal subjects, between the ages of sixteen and sixty, within the sheriffdom of Fife, to attend the King at Falkland on the 24th day of August 1583, well armed, and carrying with them provisions for fifteen days, under the penalties of death, and forfeiture of lands and goods.

While the King and his advisers were thus engaged in restraining the seditious practices of the associated Lords, it was not likely that the ministers would view these transactions with indifference. They held a General Assembly on the 10th of October, in which they proceeded to draw up certain articles to be presented to the King, in which they set forth all their grievances, real or imaginary. Among other individuals whom they attacked were the King of France, the Duke of Guise, "and other Papists there," the Earls of Huntly, Crawford, and others in this country, whom they characterized as "apostates," "sworn enemies to Christ," "traitors," "maintainers of idolatry," "wicked and obstinate Papists," "traffickers against God." \* Various other grievances, of a more personal nature, were also enumerated, and laid before the King. But the reception those articles met with from James, did not satisfy them. It was in vain that they were reminded, that alliances and treaties might be made with foreign princes, without the difference of religion making them unlawful, and

\* Calderwood, p. 142.

that they had no business to interfere; they were obstinate in their opinions, and moderation was with them equivalent to open contempt of religion.

The ministers, indeed, had been more than ordinarily active in their justification of the Raid of Ruthven, and, in particular, the famous Andrew Melville had made no secret of his opinions. This individual, who first introduced Presbyterianism into Scotland, had, ever since his arrival from Geneva, kept the kingdom in a continual turmoil. His zeal transported him beyond the bounds of prudence and moderation, and frequently led him to act in a manner which no well-constituted government could tolerate. Honest and sincere he doubtless was in his religious notions, but his irritable temper hurried him into the most extravagant excesses. It has been already observed, that the ministers were leagued with Gowrie and the associated Lords in their seditious attempt upon the King's person at Ruthven, and it was their interest to justify the whole plot to the people in their pulpit lucubrations. In 1583, Melville preached a sermon on the famous fast-day which the ministers had appointed to be held when they insulted the French ambassadors; and as the Presbyterian preachers of that age generally harangued their hearers from the most violent passages in the Jewish Scriptures, Melville's sermon was founded on the fourth chapter of the Prophecy of Daniel, which narrates the catastrophe of Belshazzar, as indicated by the famous hand-writing on the wall, interpreted by the Prophet himself. The sermon was preached at St Andrew's; but it was so violent and seditious, that Melville was summoned to appear before the Council. At the time ap-

pointed he obeyed the summons, but formally tendered his protestation against the charge; maintaining, moreover, that "what was spoken in the pulpit, ought first to be tried and judged by the Presbytery; and that neither the King nor Council could, *in prima instantia*, meddle therewith, though the speeches were treasonable." \* This logic, however, made little impression on the King, who was present, or the Council, who were irritated at his insolent behaviour. But Melville cared little for the presence or the person of his sovereign. "You are too bold," said he, "in a regular Christian church, to pass by the pastors, prophets, and doctors, and to take upon yourselves to judge the doctrine, and controul the ambassadors and messengers of a greater than any here. But that ye may see your own weakness and rashness in taking upon ye that which ye neither ought nor can do, there," (taking a small Hebrew Bible from his pocket, and laying it down with violence before the King and Chancellor,) "there are my instructions and warrant, and see if any of you can controul me, or say that I have exceeded my injunctions." This deplorable and insolent language astonished the Council. "Sir," said Arran, who was Chancellor, taking up the Bible and presenting it to the King, "he scorneth your Majesty." "Nay," replied Melville, "I scorn not, I am in good earnest." After various examinations he was dismissed, and ordered to enter himself at the Castle of Blackness within twenty-four hours; but Melville, conscious that he had justly offended, fled that night to Berwick. Pro-

\* Spottiswoode, p. 830. Calderwood, *ut sup.*

bably he feared to enter the Castle of Blackness, as it was held by Arran's dependents. Immediately after his flight, all the seditious preachers sounded his praises, and extolled his pretended sufferings as if he had become a renowned martyr for truth. Others of the preachers were also sought after by the Court, who had less ability and influence, but who were fully as seditious. They contrived, however, to escape punishment, by a timely retreat into England.\*

But while the government was thus occupied with the ministers, the banished noblemen were not inactive. A few of those who were concerned in the Raid of Ruthven, had left the kingdom according to the tenor of the proclamation against them; but a new conspiracy was formed, of a more daring nature than the former. Of this conspiracy, the Earl of Gowrie again was the great leader. The Earl of Mar and the Master of Glamis had retired to Ireland, and some of their associates had retreated into England, in direct violation of the security which they gave to the government, that they would leave the kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, and not return within the same, without the King's special permission.† Lord Boyd, with the Lairds of Lochleven and Easter Wemyss, proceeded to France, while others of less influence were confined within certain bounds in Scotland. Gowrie had obtained permission, notwithstanding his reconciliation with Arran, to proceed to France in virtue of the royal proclamation,

\* Calderwood, p. 144—147. Spottiswoode, p. 330. Stevenson's History, vol. i. p. 154.

† Moyes' Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland, p. 85.

and under the pretence of finding a vessel to convey him thither, he went to Dundee, where he lurked about longer than the time assigned him for his departure, under various pretences; even for four or five months after the departure of Mar and Glamis, he was found lingering, pretending that he would depart "this day and that day." \* The time specified for the final departure of Gowrie was the last day of March 1584, with an intimation to him, and those of his associates who had not obeyed the royal proclamation, that if they failed, they would be apprehended and punished as rebels. Gowrie had previously joined in condemning the Raid of Ruthven, in which he had been a distinguished actor; but finding that this admission did not mitigate his punishment, he again recanted, and corresponded with his former associates. † It was not his intention, however, to leave the country, as he had for some time held a correspondence with Mar and Glamis in Ireland, the substance of which was, that they should return home, and a second time attempt to surprise the King's person. ‡

The Court, by some means or other, got notice of this new confederacy, or, at least, of Gowrie's concern in the correspondence with Mar and Glamis; § and he was accordingly charged on the

\* Historie of King James the Sext, p. 199, 202.

† Calderwood, p. 143.

‡ Spottiswoode, p. 330.

§ It is asserted, however, by Sir James Melville, (Memoirs, p. 155), that Mar, Glamis, and the other insurgents, had arranged the whole matter before Gowrie was party in it, and that he would have left the country, though he was "of nature over-slow," had not the "despight"

second of March to leave the kingdom within fifteen days, while a message was despatched to Elizabeth, entreating her to command Mar and Glamis to leave Carrick-Fergus in Ireland, where they had chosen to reside. Gowrie, however, by shifts and evasions, continued to disregard the proclamation, and resided at Dundee, where he found means to arrange the projected enterprise. It was concluded that Mar and Glamis, with their friends, should return from Ireland, and proceed to Stirling, where they would be joined by Gowrie and the Earl of Angus, the latter of whom had been recently recalled from exile, but confined on his parole to his own house in the North. Mustering their friends and forces at Stirling, they were thence to send a supplication to the King, setting forth the imaginary dangers which then threatened both church and state. In the meanwhile, Mar and the Master of Glamis were to surprise the Castle of Stirling, after they had been joined by Gowrie and Angus. Several other noblemen were connected with this conspiracy, though at the time they remained neutral, particularly the Earl of Bothwell, and Lord Lindsay.

Such was the plan which Gowrie and his associates had adopted for the recovering of their influence and power ; and there can be little doubt that he had induced the banished noblemen to take part in this enterprise, as they seem to have been guided solely by his representations. In pursuance of the plan which had been regularly concocted in this treasonable correspondence, Mar

he entertained towards Arran " moved him to stay and take part with them."



and Glammis arrived in Scotland in the month of April, and, with the aid of Angus, began to collect their followers for the attack on Stirling. But the vigilance of the King gave the first blow to the confederacy. On the 16th of April, only two days before the intended surprise of Stirling Castle, Gowrie was apprehended at Dundee, by Stewart, Captain of the Royal Guard, specially deputed for that purpose. Gowrie, who was completely aware of the treasons in which he was engaged, made a brave resistance before he was taken prisoner, and held out his house in Dundee for some hours in defiance of the royal commission, and the soldiers under Stewart's command. \*

The confederacy, however, had been amply matured before Gowrie's apprehension, which, it would appear, had been effected very unexpectedly, † as there is every reason to conclude that his associates were not aware of the fact. He was apprehended on the 16th of April; and had they received intelligence of the activity of the government, they would certainly have paused before they proceeded to extremes. In full reliance, however, on Gowrie's assistance, more especially as he was residing in a district in which he had numerous friends and followers, Mar, Angus, the Master of Glammis, the Commendators of Dry-

\* Sir James Balfour's Annals, vol. i. p. 377, 378. Moyes, p. 86.

† We are informed by Archbishop Spottiswoode, (Hist. p. 330), that Gowrie was unexpectedly surprised by Stewart, "as he lay in the house of William Drummond, burgess in Dundee." He pretended to hold out the house; "but the town concurring with the Captain, he was forced to yield."

burgh and Cambuskenneth, with others of the leaders, attacked Stirling on the 18th, and forcibly took possession of the town.\* They easily got possession of the Castle, and, erecting their standard, they published a manifesto, professing that they were compelled to this extremity on account of the unhappy state of the government. This manifesto, which, according to Calderwood, was issued on the 22d of April, was not very remarkable for its moderation. After a long preamble, in which they affected to be actuated by motives of pure patriotism, they indulged in bitter invectives against those who were then at the Court, terming them "an insolent company, manifest and avowed Papists, Atheists, and excommunicated persons, enemies to the religion and state, favourers of the bloody Council of Trent, as appeareth by banishing the most learned of the ministers," &c. Arran was charitably termed "a tyrant," a "godless and bloody atheist, and seditious Catiline," "the chief disturber of the country, patron of all kinds of vice and iniquity." They concluded by maintaining that they alone had "the fear of God before their eyes." †

Intelligence of this bold exploit having reached the metropolis, where the King then resided, and roused the government to activity, a proclamation was speedily issued by James, commanding his subjects to follow him to Stirling, with provision for thirty days, while a few of the nobles at court who were suspected, were placed under restraint.

\* Calderwood, (*History*, p. 149), says it was on the 17th.

† *Ib.* p. 149, 150.

The citizens of the metropolis evinced a remarkable zeal for the King, and the town-council even advanced money to pay soldiers who would enlist. \* It was on the 19th of April that information of the surprise of Stirling Castle was received; and before the 24th, two days after the insurgents' manifesto had appeared, a considerable army was in readiness to march against the rebels, amounting to nearly 20,000 men. The tidings of these active preparations soon reached the insurgents, but already had they become disheartened. The apprehension of Gowrie had dissipated their hopes, as they imagined that it was a mere pretence on his part to betray them, he having deserted them once before. Their friends and followers also were more tardy in espousing their cause than they were led to anticipate; while Elizabeth, who had been the chief exciter of the exploit, had neglected to fulfil her promise by sending them the expected supply of money. They had possession of the fortress but a few days, when they were disheartened and irresolute. They had only 300 men with them to oppose the royal army, which was commanded by their implacable enemies.

The King, having put his army in motion, and sent out a detachment under the command of Stewart, who had apprehended Gowrie, advanced in person towards Stirling. The near approach of the royal army struck them with dismay; and, finding it impossible to hold out against a superior force, Angus, Mar, and Glamis, abandoned the fortress, and fled into England. The Master of Livingstone was sent with a party to surround the

\* Spottiswoode, p. 330.

Castle; but the fortress was surrendered to the King at the first summons. We are informed by Calderwood, that there were only twenty-eight men in the garrison, and of these the captain and three others were executed.\* The command of the Castle was given to Arran, and "this rash and feeble attempt produced such effects as usually follow disappointed conspiracies. It not only hurt the cause for which it was undertaken, but added strength and reputation to the King, confirmed Arran's power, and enabled them to pursue their measures with more boldness and greater success."†

The government now turned their attention to the principal agitators. Of these Gowrie was the only one of rank in custody, and as he had become incorrigible from his inveterate propensity to turbulence and mischief, it was resolved to bring him to trial. He had been brought by sea to Leith, and thence had been removed to the metropolis, where he remained a prisoner. At the King's command he was removed to Stirling, where the Court continued to reside after the recovery of the Castle. He was accordingly removed thither; and on the fourth of May, 1584, he was put on his defence before a jury of his peers for high treason. There were also tried at the same time two of the persons engaged in the affair, Archibald Douglas and John Forbes. The charges against him were four, and of a singular import, "1st, That he intended and had begun a new conspiracy against the King, whom he had also kept prisoner in his house some time before.

\* Calderwood, p. 150.

† Robertson's History, 8vo. edit. 1806, vol. ii. p. 128.

2d, That he conferred by night with the servants of Angus, to seize the towns of Perth and Stirling. 3d, That he had resented the King's authority at Dundee, and had conceived a conspiracy against the life of the King and his mother. 4th, That he had consulted a certain woman, who was a notorious witch, respecting the success of his conspiracy and enterprises." \*

The persons who presided at Gowrie's trial were John Graham, who acted as judge; and to him were joined Gordon of Lochinvar, the Master of Livingstone, Edmonstone of Duntrath, and Bruce of Airth; and it is remarkable, that two of these who were specially nominated by the King himself, were connected with Gowrie's family, Gordon was married to Isabel, one of Gowrie's own daughters, and the Master of Livingstone was also his relation, Sir William de Ruthven the first Lord Ruthven, who died in 1528, having

\* Sir James Balfour's Annals, vol. i. p. 278. But in Maitland's History of Scotland, folio, vol. iii. p. 1176, 1177, the charges are given in a more plausible manner. " 1st, That in the beginning of February, one David Hume, a servant of Mar's, had, privately at Perth, communicated to him the treasonable device of surprising that burgh and Stirling, at least *one of them*, to which he agreed. 2d, That he had used every means to get himself introduced to one Erskine, knowing him to be agent for the Earl of Mar, and had conferred with him about surprising Stirling Castle, and the supplying it with men and ammunition. 3d, That having been commanded to surrender himself to the Chancellor, Lord Pittenween, &c. he had stood out for three hours, after calling on the people of Dundee to assist him. And lastly, that though he was bound to maintain his sovereign's life, honour and crown, he had treasonably concealed an affair which concerned his safety, and that of the Queen his mother, and had as yet hid the particulars. The reader will find the authentic indictments

married Isabel, a daughter of Lord Livingstone of Saltcoats, in the county of Haddington.\* The jury of peers consisted of the Earls of Arran, Argyle, Crawford, Montrose, Glencairn, Eglinton, Marischall, Lords Saltoun, Somerville, Doon, Livingstone, Drummond, Ogilvy, Oliphant, the Laird of Tullibardine, and the Master of Elphingstone. Of these, Montrose, Livingstone, Drummond, and Ogilvy, were connected by relationship with the family of Ruthven,† and from that circumstance it has been concluded that the King wished to save Gowrie, otherwise he would not have placed so many of his relations among his judges.

While Gowrie remained at Edinburgh, before his arrival at Stirling, he was examined by the Earl of Montrose, Lord Doon, and Sir Robert Melville, to whom he confessed that he had corresponded with the exiled noblemen, but positively denied that he intended to seize the King's person. Indeed, he admitted almost the whole of the charges, and confessed that the Earls of Marischall and Bothwell, Lord Lindsay, and some of the Western Barons, were connected with the confederacy—that they expected a supply from England—and that Elizabeth intended to induce the

in Mr Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, of which the above, however, is the substance. Gowrie was found guilty of "not onlie maist innaturallie and treasonable committing maist hiè treasoun, in conceling of ane purpois of sa wechtie importance, bot also persisting in the said treasoun, the continuance of his silence, and not declaring of ye said purpos, tending to ye perrill of his Maiestie's lyf and estate."

\* The Treasonable Conspiracies of the Earls of Gowrie, by George Earl of Cromarty, 8vo. Edin. 1714, p. 12, 13.

† Ibid. *ut sup.*



Hamiltons to join them. His request for an audience of the King, which he made by letter addressed to James himself, was denied; and as he had added, in a postscript, that it was not the concealing of treason of which he intended to speak to the King, but "the revealing of a benefit," this expression was made a part of the indictment against him.

It is not to be denied, however, that the trial proceeded in a very summary manner, and that though the fact of treason was indisputable, Gowrie's judges were by no means disposed to allow him the benefit of the law. He objected to Gordon of Lochinvar, on account of some family differences existing between them, which objection was overruled. He observed, secondly, that the noblemen who examined him had given a solemn pledge, that whatsoever he confessed would not be alleged against him; whereas, what he then admitted was now made part of the indictment. To this it was answered, that those noblemen had no power to give him any such assurance. Thirdly, he maintained, that as he was charged with treason, he ought to have had a citation of forty days notice, and his accuser specified; but it was replied, that in matters of treason, the King could arrest the person at all times. Fourthly, he raised an objection on the merits of his license to leave the country, which was also repelled. His last objection was, that what he had offered to reveal to the King was not connected with the charges, but for the King's own benefit; and to this it was replied, that his concealing of the affair was criminal, and suspicious.

The objections being thus overruled, the jury

found Gowrie guilty of high treason, and, with his two companions, of being engaged in a conspiracy against the King and Government. Gowrie was accordingly sentenced to be beheaded at the market-cross of Stirling, and his body to be dismembered as a traitor. The other two were ordered to be hanged.

On the evening of the same day, betwixt the hours of eight and nine, Gowrie was led out to execution. Douglas and Forbes had been executed immediately after their sentence. He made a long speech on the scaffold, which was much extolled by the Presbyterian ministers, on account of its piety and spirit of resignation. He professed that all his actions were intended for the benefit of the King, and endeavoured to free the other nobles, and the Presbyterian ministers who were engaged in his practices, from any charge or intention of treason. He observed, in conclusion, as is usual in these circumstances, that had he served God as faithfully as he had done the King, he would not have come to that end. He conducted himself with the utmost resolution. He calmly laid his head on the block, and it was severed from his body at one blow. The other part of the sentence was remitted, and his servants were allowed to inter his body. \* His estates were seized, and an act of attainder and confiscation was passed by the government. †

\* “His servants,” says Sir James Balfour, “did sow his head to his body, and incontinently buried the same.”

† Moyes’s *Memoirs*, p. 89. Spottiswoode, p. 332, 333. Calderwood, p. 151. Melville’s *Memoirs*, p. 156. Sir James Balfour, vol. i. p. 378. The Earl of Cromarty’s *Account*, &c. p. 23. *Memorabilia of Perth*, p. 143. The *Historie of King James the Sext*, p. 203, 204.

Thus perished on the scaffold the first Earl of Gowrie, a nobleman whose life had been a continued scene of intrigues, factions, and cabals. Two days after his execution, on the 6th of May, the King departed for Edinburgh, having given the government of Stirling Castle to Arran. Historians agree in assigning to Gowrie a very high character for ability, but unquestionably he had given no great indications of superior talents. He appears to have been a man of great irresolution, and sensible of his rashness when it was too late to retrieve his errors. Connected as he was with the more violent of the Presbyterian ministers, whose sole study it was to insult and oppose the King, he of course received from them the incense of applause, and was held by them as one of the greatest patriots of his age. But although much may be said in extenuation of Gowrie, neither the violence of party nor the keenness of partisanship can free him from the charge of his being a dangerous subject in a rude and turbulent age.

## CHAPTER II.

## II. THE GOWRIE CONSPIRACY.

The King is *Pater Patriæ*, a chief  
Ofttimes is born for all his kinne's mischief,  
And more, I know was never heart nor hand  
Did prosper, which that King did e'er withstand.

ADAMSON'S *Muses Threnodie*.

VARIOUS attempts were made, after this period, to seize the person of the King, who soon obtained his majority. Francis, Earl of Bothwell, nephew to the murderer of Darnley, aided by some of the Popish barons, with a number of retainers, assembled shortly afterwards at *Quarry-Holes*, near the village of Restalrig, and about a mile distant from the Palace of Holyroodhouse, for the purpose of seizing the King and overthrowing the Protestant religion. The same Earl of Bothwell, with some others, in 1591, surprised the Palace of Holyroodhouse, while the King and Queen were at supper, killed one of the royal attendants, called for fire to consume the doors which were barred against them, and, perhaps, would have carried their riot to the greatest excesses, had they not been repulsed by Sir James Sandilands and others, who se-

cured eight of the rioters, who were hanged next morning before the palace-gate. This same Earl of Bothwell, in the following year, with the Master of Gray and others, entered into a treasonable correspondence with the Court of Spain, and actually assaulted the Palace of Falkland at midnight, in which they would have been successful, had they not been vigorously opposed by the inmates of the palace, and some of the neighbouring inhabitants. They betook themselves to flight, but not before they had plundered the royal stables and the park of the horses. Several of those conspirators were also slain or hanged. In the year 1596, a most outrageous attack was made on the King and Council when assembled in the Tolbooth, by the rabble of Edinburgh, excited by the ministers, one of whom had prepared them for it, by edifying them with a sermon in Haddo's Hold Church on the story of Haman. There were numerous other attempts of less note; and it is somewhat remarkable, as has been observed by a very competent judge, that "nobles of the Popish and Presbyterian religion frequently united in the same conspiracies." \*

William, the first Earl of Gowrie, left twelve children, and though forfeited, his eldest son James was restored to the earldom in 1586, and died in 1588, aged fourteen years. He was succeeded by his brother John, who, with his brother Alexander, called improperly the Master of Ruthven, were the contrivers of what is known by the name of the Gowrie Conspiracy. † They were both born at

\* Arnot's Criminal Trials, p. 35, 36, 37.

† In Douglas's Peerage, vol. i. p. 663, we have an account of the other children of the first Earl of Gowrie.

Gowrie-House, in the town of Perth ; the former was baptized on the 25th September 1575, and was therefore in the twenty-fifth year of his age at the time of his death. His brother Alexander was baptized on the 22d of January 1580-1, and was only nineteen. \*

Both the brothers had resided for a considerable time in Italy. The Earl of Gowrie was at the University of Padua, and left that place in 1599, on his return to Scotland. During his residence there, he had pursued the advantages which his high rank afforded him ; he was skilled in every martial accomplishment, and he had received an education which his talents enabled him to improve. His external appearance, too, was noble, and the qualities of his mind are said to have equalled the handsomeness of his person. Possessed of no inconsiderable influence, his return, of course, was hailed with rapture by the ministers, as the head of a house with which they had been long

William Ruthven, the fourth son, went abroad, and became famous as a chemist. Patrick Ruthven, was a physician, and was confined many years in the Tower of London. He was released in 1619. His daughter married Vandyke, the famous painter. Lady Margaret Ruthven married James, the fourth Earl of Montrose, and was the mother of the great Marquis. Lady Mary married the Earl of Athole. Lady Sophia married Ludovick, second Duke of Lennox. Lady Jean married Lord Ogilvy of Airly, and was mother of the first Earl of Airly. Beatrix, one of the Maids of Honour to the Queen, married Sir John Home of Coldingknows. Isabel married first Sir Robert Gordon of Lochinvar, and secondly, Lord Loudoun, who was a famous Covenanter in 1638, being incited by her to the "good cause," though himself a man of very loose morals. Dorothea married Wemyss, the Laird of Pittencrieff, in Fife.

\* MS. Register of Deaths at Perth, p. 59.



connected, and whose father they pretended had died a martyr for their cause. It is to be observed, too, that one of the most popular preachers had been preceptor to Gowrie and his brother, as, indeed, he had been to all the first Earl's children. This was Robert Rollock, appointed Principal and Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, at which University Gowrie had received the degree of Master of Arts, who had failed not to enforce the favourite topic of his brethren, and had instilled into the minds of Gowrie and his brother the alleged injustice of the sentence which had deprived their father of his life. It would be unfair, however, to insinuate, that Gowrie's preceptor, or the ministers in general, were the contrivers of his enterprise, or incited him to the rash adventure. But it is clear, that the idea of his father having been murdered, aided by his youthful ardour, his naturally bold disposition, his popularity with the ministers, his ambition, and his connexions both with England and the popular party, as well as his near affinity to the royal family, must have deeply impressed his mind, and made him view the King with no very kindly feelings of loyal attachment.

The earldom of Gowrie, as has been already observed, had been restored after the forfeiture of the first Earl, in the person of his eldest son, who, at the time of his death in 1588, was in the fourteenth year of his age. His brother John succeeded to the honours and estates, at that time a mere youth; and it is to be observed, that had James intended, as has been alleged, to destroy the Ruthven family, it is not likely that he would have removed the attainder, when he had them completely under his power. On the contrary, the

King seems to have been anxious to make all the reparation possible for the manner of the first Earl's death, as if he had been actuated by a sort of compunction on account of the manner of it; for, besides restoring to the family all their possessions and honours, Alexander Ruthven was made one of the Royal Bed-chamber; his sister, Lady Beatrice, was appointed Maid of Honour to the Queen; and Spottiswoode observes, that James "had a purpose to advance the Earl himself to a principal office in the kingdom." These facts incontestably prove, that James could have no secret hatred towards a family with whom he was nearly allied even in relationship.

Gowrie, after the decease of his brother, had proceeded to the Continent in 1594, under the care of William Rhynd, who is mentioned as the first Rector of the School of Perth, and who afterwards was one of the witnesses in the investigation of the enterprise. He was Rector of that School in March 1590, and was a man of considerable learning. In 1594, he attended Gowrie and his brother to Padua, but he returned in 1597, three years before the Earl. He does not appear to have been connected with the enterprise of the two brothers, as will appear from his depositions, and other facts in the sequel. In Padua, Gowrie greatly distinguished himself; he was chosen Rector of the University on one occasion, and his name and arms were emblazoned in the College-hall. While he was on the Continent, he visited Geneva, and resided three months with the celebrated Theodore Beza, to whom he had letters of recommendation from his preceptor Rollock, who, it is said, "loved him so dearly, that he never made mention,

nor heard of his death, but with tears;” and so great was Beza’s attachment to the family, that, a year after Gowrie’s death, and when the family was proscribed and exiled, he wrote to his two brothers, Patrick and William, and offered them an asylum at Geneva, if they chose to accept his invitation.

While Gowrie was at Padua, he received a letter from the King, which appears to have been complimentary, and written in James’ usual good-natured manner. He wrote an answer to this letter, dated Padua, 24th September 1595, the original of which is preserved in the University of Edinburgh.\* In the year 1599, he left Padua, and visited the court of Henry IV. at Paris, where he was received with marked distinction. From Paris he proceeded to England, and Elizabeth entertained him in a manner which was flattering to his pride, and gratifying to his ambition. “She ordered that guards should attend him; that all the honours should be paid to him which were due to a Prince of Wales, and to her first cousin; and that he should be entertained at the public expense all the time he should remain at her court.”† It is impossible to say what might have been concerted between him and Elizabeth, but those marked distinctions were extremely injudicious; nor need we wonder at his haughty demeanour towards the King, when he waited on James at Edinburgh after his arrival from the English Court in 1600. Be-

\* This letter was published by Lord Hailes, in his *Remarks on this Conspiracy*, and also by Mr Scott of Perth, in his *History of the Gowrie Family*.

† MS. quoted by Mr Scott of Perth, in his *History of the Gowrie Family*, p. 118, 119.

fore his arrival, his friends and partisans had made known his intention of passing through Edinburgh on his way to Perth, and multitudes resorted to see the young Earl of Gowrie enter the city. It is said, that beholding the crowd as he passed along the streets, he peevishly observed, "There were as many people who conveyed his father to the scaffold at Stirling."

It is not my intention here to insert all the stories which have been told respecting Gowrie and the King, his brother Alexander, his sister Beatrice, the alleged intrigue of the Queen and Alexander Ruthven, all of which stories have been raked together by the admirers of Gowrie, without considering whether they were true or false, for the purpose of proving James' hatred to the Ruthven family. Some of them may be true; perhaps they are all idle traditions; but certainly they are extremely silly, and do not in the slightest degree elucidate the enterprise of Gowrie, or bear against the character of the King. It was on the 20th of May 1600, that the Earl of Gowrie arrived at Perth. A contemporary chronicler has related with minuteness the very hour of his arrival at his palace in Perth called Gowrie House, which was "at six hours in the evening, with a large retinue."\* The state of the country at the close of the sixteenth century, though apparently tranquil, was not much better than it had been in the preceding year of turbulence; religious disputes still agitated the nation; and the King had sufficiently exasperated the Presbyterian ministers by his marked dislike

\* Mercer's Chronicle, MS. Advocates' Library.

of, and indifference to, their order and pretensions. The arrival of a nobleman, in the flower of his youth, the friend of Theodore Beza and other Genevan theologians, whose family had been long viewed as the head of the party attached to England and the Presbyterian interest, whose accomplishments were considerable, whose ambition was doubtless more aspiring on account of his royal descent, and whose influence over his extensive estates gave him additional importance, could not fail to be gratifying to the popular party. It is admitted by all, too, that Gowrie made very great pretensions to religion; and his virtues and his principles were afterwards celebrated with more than ordinary panegyric. If it could be proved that Gowrie, during his absence, corresponded with the Presbyterian ministers, or any of their leaders, it would throw very considerable light on this affair; but although it cannot be alleged with certainty, the fact is not improbable; nay, it is almost certain, that he would, from time to time, receive communications from his friends in Scotland, relative to the state of the country, religion, and the court, and these would contain many allusions to his father's fate. That he corresponded with Logan of Restalrig, during his absence, is almost certain, as will appear in the sequel; and this of itself, perhaps, is sufficient authority for the preceding conjecture. The zeal of his preceptor would also aggravate these representations, while they would become additional excitements to Gowrie's ambition. Thus, two principles, ambition and revenge, would in process of time be entertained by Gowrie; and there can be little doubt that the enterprise in which he was so soon after-

wards engaged had been formed in his mind before his arrival in Scotland ;—at least, that he had determined to be guided by circumstances. It must not be forgotten, too, that the fanatics of that period frequently reproached James with bastardy, in their zeal to vindicate the murder of Rizzio ; and of course this would operate powerfully with Gowrie, inasmuch as certain expressions in the letters of Logan of Restalrig hint that he aimed at the crown ; and it is well known that he propagated a rumour that his mother was descended from the Princess Margaret of England, daughter of Henry VII., and widow of James V., who had married Lord Ruthven ; which report was believed by the vulgar about Perth.\* However ridiculous Gowrie's ambition may appear, as the House of Hamilton and other great families interposed between him and the crown, it is more than probable that he entertained these notions in the ardour of youth, supported as he was by the “ newlie erectit societie callit the Presbiterie,” having a reputation for sanctity and courage, and held by that party as the most ardent of those who fortified the “ chief block-house of the Lord's Jerusalem,” and not one of those who were “ worthie to be accursed, and not to brook the name of Scottish men, but to be esteemed enemies to God, religion, and his Highness, that would not willingly subscribe thereunto,” namely, “ *solemne covenants and bands* (the word of God and prayer going before), betwixt God and the King, God and the people,

\* Scott's History of Scotland, folio, p. 553.



and betwixt the King and the people.”\* Of Gowrie’s private habits, however, we have pretty good information furnished by contemporary writers; by which it appears, that notwithstanding the “sanguine hopes of the early virtues” of him and his brother, he was not without his own share of superstition, as was proved from various papers which were found in his possession after his death. “This Erle of Gourie,” says one author, “at his being in Italie, advysit with a mathematician ther, and to knaw of him what suld becum of himsel; wha gave this responce, that he sould be extreimlie weill lovit, unmarreit, wherfore he salbe melancolious, he sall have gret commandement, he sall die in honour be the sworde, and efter his deceis it salbe sayd, that be fraud and decept he hes attened that dignitie. This was fand amang his secret papers.”† It would appear, however, that the fortune-tellers with whom Gowrie consulted, differed considerably from each other in their opinions about his future fortunes. In a letter from Nicolson to Secretary Cecil, dated 22d November 1600, there is the following passage:—“One Colvil hath sent the King the collection of the fortune to befall Gowrie upon his securitie, written with the Earle’s hand in French at Orleans, and there found, containing that he should return, be in great credit, seek for a wife, and yet die with his own hand, before he should be married.”

Gowrie had been chosen Provost of Perth in 1592; and so great was the favour of the town towards him, that he was continued in that office

\* Calderwood, p. 447.

† Historie of King James the Sext, p. 375.

even while he was in Italy. The town of Perth, at that period, and for centuries previous, yielded, perhaps, only to the metropolis in point of importance ; in it many of the principal nobility had houses, and it had often been the favourite residence of the Scottish monarchs. It was then called St Johnstoun, from the name of its tutelary patron, St John. In several of the public records or writs in the time of James VI., it is called a city, and it still has some pretensions to that title, though never the seat of a bishop or of the government.

In the *Memorabilia* of Perth, under the year 1594, there is the following notice respecting the election of Gowrie as Provost:—"On the 6th of August, this year, the Earl told the council that he was to go abroad for his education ; they unanimously entered into a resolution to elect him Provost next Michaelmas, and became bound for their successors in office to elect him annually until he returned. This agreement is signed by the whole town-council, in presence of Mr Patrick Galloway, minister of Perth, the King's chaplain, and Henry Elder, town-clerk."

Gowrie, as we have seen, arrived at Perth, on the 20th of May 1600. On the 28th of June that year, there is a notice of his proceedings in one of his own courts, as lord of the regality. "David Drummond was executed for the slaughter of George Ramsay's man. He was condemned in the first justice court that ever John Earl of Gowrie held after his return." \* The Earl, it appears, kept himself at Gowrie House, and cau-

\* Mercer's Chronicle, MS.

tiously pretended to take no part in the measures of the court. But while he was thus residing in a retired manner at his own house in Perth, he was by no means inactive in the great enterprise he contemplated. In the immediate vicinity of Edinburgh resided Robert Logan, who possessed the estate of Restalrig, which extends between the Frith of Forth and the city; a turbulent baron, whose intrigues, schemes, and noted profligacy, were eventually the cause of his forfeiture. This baron had been deprived of a considerable part of his estate during the minority of James for his conduct, he being rather a troublesome neighbour to the citizens of Edinburgh; and at this period his affairs were almost desperate. The family had made a considerable figure in the early history of the country, and were connected with some of the first nobility. With this baron, Gowrie was himself remotely allied. Patrick, sixth Lord Gray, and father of the famous Master of Gray, married Barbara Ruthven, sister of Patrick, Lord Ruthven, who assassinated David Rizzio; and that lady was the aunt of William, the first Earl of Gowrie. Agnes Gray, sister of the sixth Lord Gray, and aunt of the Master, married Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig, whom John Knox characterizes as a man "neither fortunate nor prudent;" and that baron was the father of Robert Logan, the correspondent and associate of Gowrie. \*

After Gowrie's return from the Continent, a connexion was formed between him and Logan, as appears from his letters, discovered eight years after-

\* Arnot's Criminal Trials, p. 14.

wards, by one George Sprot, a notary public at Eyemouth, who was himself executed for his share in Gowrie's enterprise, and who confessed that he knew well that Logan was in the plot. Hardly had eight weeks elapsed after Gowrie's return, when a correspondence took place between him and Logan, by means of one James Bour, familiarly called Laird Bour, a servant of the latter, and of whose fidelity he entertained a very high opinion. Alexander Ruthven, the brother of Gowrie, appears to have been the only other person in the secret at that time. After many personal interviews, the object of which was to concert a plot for an attack on the King, a plan was devised to that effect, which was intended to be put into execution on one of the King's hunting expeditions. Logan was then residing in Fastcastle, a castle or fort, now in complete ruins, situated in the parish of Coldingham, and county of Berwick, on the sea-side, and, from the steepness of the rock on which it is built, inaccessible on all sides, except by a narrow neck of land a few feet in breadth. At this period it belonged to the Logans of Restalrig, and the recollection of this fact will tend to throw considerable light on the history of this daring enterprise. In a letter from Fastcastle, dated 10th July 1600, to a person whose name was never discovered, Laird Bour is introduced for the first time by Logan to his friend, who is styled *right honourable Sir*; and he endeavours to prepossess his correspondent with the same opinion which he held himself, respecting the worthy Laird. "Pleis zow onderstand," says Logan, "my Lo. of Gowrie, and some utheris his Lo.'s freinds and weillwillaris,

quha tendaris his Lo.'s preferment, ar vpoun the resolutioun, ze knaw, *for the revenge of that caus.*" He then mentions a meeting which was to take place between him and Alexander Ruthven on the ensuing week, "and be as warrie," he says, "as zow can."—"I pray zow, sir, think nathing althocht the berar onderstand it [the conspiracy], for he is the special secretar of my lyfe: his name is Laird Boure, and wes auld Maunderstoune's man for deid and lyfe, and ewin sa for me. And for my pairt, he sall knaw of all that I do in this world, sa lang as euer we live togidder, ffor I mak him my houshalde man; he is weill worthie of credite, and I recommend him to zow." The following extract relates to the plan of the conspiracy. "I think best for oure platt, that we meet at my hous of Fastcastle, ffor I have concludit with M. A. R. [Mr Alexander Ruthven], how, I think, sall be meitest to be convoyit quietest in ane boitt be sea; at quhilk time vpoun sure aduertesment, I sall haue ye place verie quiett, and *weill provydit.*"

On the same day, Logan had despatched a letter to Laird Bour, dated from the Canongate, by which it appears that he had left Fastcastle on that very day, and had arrived at his house in the Canongate, where he required the Laird's presence; for, says he, "I haue ressaut ane new letter from my Lord of Gowrie concerning the purpose that Mr Alex. his Lordship's brother spak to me befoir,"—"I beseich zow, be at me be morne at even [to-morrow evening], for I assurit his Lo.'s servand, that I sall send zow ouer the watter within thrie dayes, with ane full resolutioun of my will, anent *all purpoises*; and I sall indeid recommend

zow and zour trustines till his Lordschip, as ye sall find ane honest recompens for zour pains."

In a third letter to the "richt honorable" person, dated from the Canongate, 27th July 1600, Logan expresses his resolute determination "to interpryse with my Lord of Gowrie," although "the skaffald were set up;" and he intimates, that he had expected a visit of Gowrie and his brother at Fastcastle, in terms of letters he had written to them both. In this letter he also says of his friend the Laird, that "howbeit he be bot ane sillie ald gleyit carle, I will answer for him that he sall be verie true." Two days after this letter, namely, on the 29th of July, Logan wrote to Gowrie, when the plot began to be arranged, informing him that he wished a meeting of the conspirators in Fastcastle, but that it would be well for him to have a previous interview with the Earl and his brothers. In this letter, there are expressions which cannot be misunderstood. After advising Gowrie to conduct himself with caution, Logan says, "I doubt not, bot with Godis grace, we sall bring oure materis till ane fyne [conclusion], *quhilk sall bring the contentmentt to ws all that ever wissed for the revenge of the machavalent* \*

\* *Machiavellian*, from the famous Nicholas Machiavel, a celebrated political writer and historian who died in 1527. He wrote a piece entitled "Del Principe," which has been generally regarded as the tyrant's manual, and on this account the epithet of *Machiavellian* is always applied to express every thing which is perfidious and base in politics. The epithet was very common in James' reign, and it was more than once applied to James himself by the ministers in the pulpit. We shall see in the sequel that Gowrie had been diligently employed in studying a



*massacring of our dearest freindis.* I doubt not but Mr A. zour Lordschip's brothir, hes informit zour Lordschip quhat course I layit doun to bring zour Lordschipsis associatis to my hous of F. [Fast-castle] be sea, quhair I suld haue all materiallis in redines for thir saif ressaveing on land and into my house, making, as it war, bot a maner of passing tyme in ane boit on the sea in this sommertyde, and nane utheris stranger is to hant my hous quhill we had concludit on the laying [contriving] of oure plat, quhilk is alreadie devysit be Mr Alexander and me."—"I protest, my lord, befor God, I wische nathing with a better heart nor to atchieve to that quhilk zour Lordschip wald fane attene unto." Gowrie also receives an invitation to meet Logan at Restalrig, but not to let *Mr W. R.*, his Lordship's "auld pedagog," know of the visit, by whom he means William Rhind, who was at that time rector of the School of Perth. It is to be observed, however, that both Logan and his servant *Laird Bour*, whose name was James, the "sillie auld gleyit carle," were not present when the plot was attempted by Gowrie; nor, to the ingenuity of the said Laird be it added, would his share of the transaction have been discovered at all, had not Sprott given the evidence of his guilt. \*

treatise entitled "*De Conjuratibibus adversus Principes*," which was a Latin translation of Machiavel's Discourses upon the First Decade of Livy.

\* It will be seen that I assume the letters of Logan to be genuine documents. As I shall have occasion to mention them more particularly in the sequel, I merely observe here, that fortunately every doubt as to their authenticity is now at an end, by the discovery of the *originals* in Logan's own hand-writing. They were recently discovered in the Register-Office, Edinburgh, and were politely

The cause of this treasonable correspondence may be easily conceived from the preceding narrative, and from the allusions in Logan's letters. It was a tender point to remind Gowrie of the "Machiavellian massacring of his dearest friends," when it had been religiously inculcated on him by his preceptor and others, that his father had been unjustly condemned—when the Presbyterian ministers had declared the treasons of that nobleman "good and acceptable services to God and the Church,"—and when the proceedings of James had already alienated or dissatisfied no inconsiderable portion of the nation. There is no evidence to prove that James hated the Gowrie family. Had he done so, it was not his interest to restore their honours and estates, and to distinguish them by many and repeated favours, as if he wished to make all the reparation possible for a sentence which had been executed in his minority, and of which, perhaps, he did not privately approve; for he might have still retained their sentence of forfeiture, and even exile, and thus at once rid himself of a family whose power and influence he might dread. But there is another very important circumstance which ought not to be forgotten. As Gowrie's father was Lord Treasurer of Scotland,

shown to me by Mr Pitcairn, the able editor of the "Criminal Trials before the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland," in course of publication. These *original letters*, with fac-similes and Logan's own signature, will be inserted in Part III. of Mr Pitcairn's valuable work,—a work which is truly national, and which will be encouraged by every man of learning, as supplying a very important desideratum, and as furnishing a vast collection of interesting records heretofore little known, save to the antiquarian.

by some means or other, the King was indebted to him the sum of 196,465*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* Scots money, including the accumulated principal and interest; and the greater part of this sum had been probably advanced to the King by Gowrie out of his own private purse, for it is well known that James was in the habit of borrowing from every person who would lend him money. Now, had the King wished to destroy the Gowrie family, he would never have restored them to their former rank, and actually ratified to the son that sum of money he owed his father. This, however, he did. The King was indebted to the Earl, as representing his father; and it appears, from the state of the accounts rendered on the 10th of May 1583, that the balance claimed by Gowrie amounted to 48,063*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* Scots, "which," observes Arnot, "as Scottish money was greater, by the half, at that time than it is now, was 72,094*l.* 17*s.* of our present Scottish money of principal, besides seventeen years (from 1583 to 1600) interest, at the then rate of 10 per cent." James restored the family by a solemn act in December 1585, and at the same time ratified the debt he owed to the first Earl; but from the King's well-known indigence, he was unable to pay it in 1600, after Gowrie's return from Italy; and as the Scottish Peers, before the Union, were liable to be arrested for debt, the young Earl was considerably embarrassed in his circumstances, doubtless by the clamorous conduct of his creditors. What kind of application may have been made to the King by Gowrie does not appear; but on the 20th of June, the Earl got a personal protection from the King and the Court of Session, to prevent his be-

ing arrested. This was exactly forty-six days from his death ; “ and from the common law,” observes Arnot, “ as well as the silence of the public records, it is probable the Earl’s creditors were never paid.” \*

To proceed, however, with the narrative. It is inexplicable how it was that Logan and his agent, Laird Bour, kept aloof from the active part of the conspiracy ; but doubtless it had been all arranged, and probably Logan had betaken himself to his residence of Fastcastle, there to receive the King, after he had been secured by Gowrie and his brother ; for it will be recollected, that such was part of the plot of the conspirators. It was on the 5th day of August 1600, that Gowrie, knowing that the King was then at Falkland Palace in Fife, which is an easy ride of between two and three hours from Perth, despatched his brother Alexander, to invite James to Gowrie House, under the pretence that a person had been secured who was a Jesuit, and who pretended that he was possessed of a quantity of gold ; but that it was neces-

\* The writer of the Traditional Account in the Town of Perth, of the death of John Earl of Gowrie, whose name was Duff, minister of Tibbermuir, sets out with this flourishing paragraph :—“ After the King had come to the full years of majority, he found the Gowrie Family under John, the third Earl, who was a younger son of the said William [the first Earl], possessed of *wealth and power* beyond the other nobility of the kingdom ; and, growing apprehensive,” &c. But the reader will be able to form a tolerable idea of Gowrie’s actual wealth, when he knows, from the above facts, that he was in so embarrassed circumstances, that he had actually to get a personal protection for arrest from the Court of Session, on the 20th of June 1600, otherwise he would have been exposed to what in Scotland is called the *diligence* of his creditors.

sary for the King to examine him in person, as he (Gowrie) suspected him to be an emissary of Rome; but this will be more particularly narrated in the sequel.

When the Earl had sent his brother to Falkland, which was early on a Tuesday morning, he proceeded to arrange his plans in Gowrie House. And the better to conceal his designs, as he was an "earnest professour," he attended sermon in St John's Church in the morning, there having been always service in Perth every Tuesday and Thursday since the year 1595. There is a story told by the author of the Traditional Account, inserted in the Memorabilia of Perth, about the Earl having on that day attended a marriage, "between a young man of the name of Lamb, and a young woman called Bell, the daughter of a respectable citizen of Perth," when he received intelligence, "that the King, and a company with him, had come to his house, on which Earl Gowrie's countenance changed, and he appeared to be a good deal perplexed; and being asked by the bride's father, in whose house he was, what *ailed him*, he said, he was distressed for a dinner to the King and his retinue, who had come upon him unexpectedly. Mr Bell urged him to accept of the dinner that was prepared for the wedding; and, it is believed, he did accept of it." Now, this foolish and improbable story, which the worthy writer imagined to be a wonderful authority in support of his own hypothesis—namely, that James had gone to Perth purposely to murder Gowrie, is just the reverse. He tells us only a few sentences before, in the commencement of his traditionary (or fabulous) narrative, that John, the third Earl of

Gowrie, was “ possessed of *wealth* and power beyond the other nobility of the kingdom ; ” and it is not likely, that his Lordship, if this were the fact, would deprive a common citizen of a dinner prepared for a special occasion, and get the whole *eatab'les* removed from the house of the said *Mr Bell* to Gowrie Palace, for the use of the King and his retinue, as if the inmates of Gowrie House had been previously on a limited allowance, and its pantry completely empty ; or as if every thing in Perth had been purchased for the marriage dinner, prepared by the said *Mr Bell* ; nor yet had Gowrie any right to conclude that the King wanted his dinner, and “ to be a good deal perplexed ” on that account, since, on the showing of the writer, he knew nothing at all of the King's movements, and, for any thing he knew, might have got only a passing call from James and his retinue. It accords rather ill with the Earl's so much boasted *wealth*, that he was compelled to be obliged to a common citizen for a dinner to the King, merely, forsooth, because James “ had come upon him unexpectedly ! ” The story, which has lost nothing by tradition, has, however, some foundation in truth. Gowrie did not deprive *Mr Bell* of the wedding dinner, because he was not present at such an occasion, but in his state of excitement at the time, he was not remarkably well provided, and, it appeared afterwards, in the investigation of the rash enterprise, that he had sent some of his servants to purchase *necessaries* in the town, and the very shop, which had some pretensions to sell *confectionaries*, was discovered where the purchases were made.



## CHAPTER III.

'The people set high price upon such names,  
'They ring well in the land.  
Your father's virtue was a rich inheritance,  
Which you've augmented richly.—What's the need  
Of noblemen? Let *us* achieve the task!

SCHILLER.

GOWRIE, as has been already observed, was at the forenoon sermon, or *exercise*, as it is called, during the time his brother Alexander was at Falkland. It is of importance, however, in order to make the narrative complete, to give a minute description of Gowrie House, as it then stood; for it has now disappeared from the "fair town of St Johnston," and has supplied materials for the jail and county buildings. The house, or palace, was originally built by the Countess of Huntly in 1520, and was situated at the south end of the street called the Watergate, which was next to, and is parallel with, the river Tay, and at the east of South Street, or *Shoegate*, as it was then called, and is so termed in the depositions. The house stood within the ancient walls of Perth, and at the south-east angle of the town, a very short distance from the river Tay, which formed the eastern boundary of the large garden pertaining to the

house. In the south-east corner of the garden stood the Monks' Tower, washed by the river, which was connected with the town-wall, the origin of the name of which Tower is thus conjectured by the late Rev. Mr Scott, with more simplicity than ingenuity. "The monks," says he, "who had been disorderly, were sometimes confined here, in order to do penance;"—a conjecture not very probable, as it respects the name.\* To the west of the Monks' Tower, beyond the street now called Canal Street, stood the ancient and strong-built Spey or Spy Tower—a fort which guarded the south gate of the town. The town-wall extended due west and east from the Spey Tower to the Monks' Tower; and it is supposed, that at the time of this memorable event, the greatest part of the ground between South Street and the town-wall was appropriated for gardens.

The House or Palace formed nearly a square, the most modern part being on the north and west.

\* Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. xviii. p. 529. It is there added, that in the 17th century, "the Earl of Kinnoul, who was Chancellor of Scotland, and possessed Gowrie House and garden, built the uppermost room of this tower to be a summer-house." The above conjecture, however, of the author of the Statistical Account, is merely hypothetical. The Monks' Tower was built in 1336, by the command of Edward I., at the expense of the monasteries of Lindoris, Balmerinloch, Aberbrothick, and Cupar Angus; and Fordun says, that the expense almost ruined those monasteries. Hence, some have supposed, says Grose (*Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 245.), that it received its appellation from that circumstance. Fordun also adds, that John de Gowrie, prior of St Andrew's, paid 280 merks towards its erection. The Monks' Tower seems to have been used as a banqueting-house, and was, after Gowrie House was converted into a barracks, used as a magazine for gunpowder, connected with the artillery.

That part in which the conspiracy was attempted, was on the south and east. The principal staircase was in the south-east angle of the court, and there was another smaller one, called in the depositions of the witnesses the *Black Turnpike*. \* The principal building contained two *stories* or flats, besides the kitchen and other offices on the ground floor, and the attics. The apartments of the family, and the bed-rooms, were chiefly in the eastern division, and were surmounted on the north by two turrets.

The windows of the dining-room looked into the garden, and commanded a splendid view of the river Tay, and the glorious scenery which adorns its banks. The principal hall was noble and spacious, and communicated with the ordinary hall, and with the great staircase which led to the courtyard. On the east side of the hall, on the right, was a door which communicated with the dining-room, and led to the garden. The greater part of the second floor, above these apartments, consisted of a gallery, which extended over all that part of the first floor occupied by the hall and dining-room. This "fair gallery," as it is called, is frequently noticed in the depositions of the witnesses. It had been ornamented with paintings and figures by the first Earl of Gowrie, whose taste in the fine arts, it is said, would have done honour to a more enlightened people than were the Scots at that time, and

\* The word *turnpike* is very common in Scotland, to denote a small winding staircase. The *turnpike* in question, with a turret at the west end of this wing of the building, was removed about the beginning of the last century.

to a more refined age. At the west end of the gallery was the gallery chamber, often mentioned in the depositions, which was separated from the gallery by a partition, and entered by a door in that partition. At the west end of this chamber, in a corner on the right, was the staircase leading down from it to the court called the *Black Turnpike*. There was also a turret in the south-west corner of the chamber, in which, if it was built like the other turrets, there must have been two windows opposite each other, the one looking into the court-yard, the other looking towards the space near South Street, or, as it was then called, the *Shoegate*. \*

\* The chief part of the foregoing minute description of Gowrie House is taken from the first and only volume hitherto published of the Perth Antiquarian Society's Transactions, in which the description is accompanied by plans of Gowrie House, and of the various floors of that part of it in which the affray took place. It may be here mentioned, that after Gowrie's confiscation his estate became the property of the town of Perth. Before the year 1745, the house frequently changed masters, but at that time it was again in the hands of the town, and the worthy Whig Town-Council of Perth, in the excess of their loyalty, thought proper to present it to a personage whose memory Scotland has no great occasion to venerate, William Duke of Cumberland, to express their gratitude for the *wonderful victory* he had achieved over a handful of ill-armed Highlanders at Culloden. That fortunate hero, who saw no occasion for having a house in a country, and especially so near the Highlands, where he was any thing but popular, and in which he never intended to reside, sold it to Government, who employed this famous palace of the Earls of Gowrie as a barracks. At the beginning of the present century, the town of Perth again acquired the property; and the spirit of innovation, or, as it is sometimes called, improvement, having

On the evening of the 4th of August, which happened to be a Monday, Gowrie summoned Alexander Henderson, chamberlain of Scoon, one of his domestics, to attend him at Gowrie House on particular business. Henderson went accordingly, and was ushered into an apartment, where he found the Earl and his brother Alexander Ruthven. The former asked him what he intended to do on the following day; to which Henderson replied, that he proposed riding to Ruthven (now called Hunting Tower), to look after the tenants. "No," said Gowrie, "you must ride with my brother to Falkland, and when he sends you back, see that you return with all diligence, if he send a letter, or any other command with you." \*

James was then at the Palace of Falkland in Fife, with only a very few attendants, enjoying the pleasures of the chase, among whom were Ludovic Duke of Lennox, (son of Esme D'Aubigney, cousin to the King's father, Lord Darnley, and who had been banished to France after the Raid of Ruthven), the Earl of Mar, Thomas, James, and George Erskine, the Earl's cousins-german, John Ramsay of the Dalhousie family, James, second son of Lord Drummond, abbot or commendator of Inchaffray, and Patrick Leslie, commendator of Lindores, second son of the Earl of Rothes. To this hunting expedition at Falkland, Gowrie had been previously invited by James, but he begged leave to decline the invitation. † Not antici-

seized the Magistrates, it was a few years ago levelled with the ground. The Jail and County Buildings are erected on the site of Gowrie House.

\* Deposition of Andrew Henderson at Falkland, 20th August 1600.

† Scott's History of the Family of Gowrie.

pating a visit of this nature from either of the Gowries, on the following morning, Tuesday, August 5th, a hunt was to take place in the parks of Falkland, and the royal party was on the point of proceeding to the spot, when Alexander Ruthven arrived at Falkland. He had left Perth in company with Henderson, and a relative named Andrew Ruthven, at four o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Falkland at seven. Having proceeded to a retired house or "lodging," near the palace, Alexander Ruthven sent Henderson to observe the movements of the King, who soon returned, and informed Ruthven, that his Majesty was setting out for the chase. Ruthven immediately proceeded to the party, and found the King in the act of mounting his horse, his attendants with their horses, and the huntsmen with their hounds, surrounding the King on the lawn or *green*. Ruthven made a low obeisance on his knee, and desired to have a moment's private conversation with the King, on an affair which he pretended was of great importance. James, whose curiosity was always remarkable, perceiving young Ruthven's apparently earnest and serious demeanour, felt considerably interested, and allowed himself to be drawn aside. Having thus excited the curiosity of the King, Ruthven informed him, that, in an evening walk, he had met a suspicious looking person, his face almost concealed by a cloak, lurking about the by-paths and suburbs of the town; and on questioning him as to his name, his occupation, and what his intentions were in thus lurking about in unfrequented paths, he hesitated, and appeared confused;—that he then examined his person closely, and perceived something concealed under



his cloak, which he discovered to be a quantity of gold in a pot or jar, consisting of various coined pieces ;—that at this discovery, he secured the person, who, it was pretended, was a Jesuit, and had got him privately into Gowrie House, without the knowledge of any individual, where he had secured him till his Majesty's pleasure was known; and he requested that the King would proceed forthwith to Perth as privately as possible, and examine the man, who was at that time confined in Gowrie House, without the knowledge even of his own brother.

James, " curious by nature, and sufficiently indigent to be inquisitive after money," \* felt somewhat interested in this plausible story, more especially as it was told with great apparent earnestness and sincerity. He thanked Ruthven, but observed, that he would not meddle in the matter, as he could deprive no man of his property, nor did the treasure appertain to the King, unless, according to the law, it had been found hid underground. To this Ruthven replied, that this was of no consequence, for the man had confessed to him that he *intended* to hide it, but that he had no leisure to inquire minutely on the subject. The King still scrupled at this logic; and Ruthven immediately replied, that he thought his Majesty too hesitating in a matter which might tend so much to his advantage and profit, but that if he refused to have any concern in it, it was very probable that his brother the Earl and some others would make it a business of their own, and thus deprive him of no inconsiderable sum of money

\* Tales of a Grandfather, First Series, vol. iii. p. 294.

which he might otherwise have possessed. The King's curiosity was now roused; and conceiving that the man might be a Jesuit in disguise, sent as an emissary from some Popish kingdom on the Continent, to excite disturbances in the country, by endeavouring to corrupt or bribe some of the nobles (a procedure of which James had sufficient experience previously), he asked Ruthven what kind of money it was, and the appearance of the man in whose possession he had discovered it. To this Ruthven replied, that he had not had sufficient time to examine it, but the money appeared to consist of foreign pieces; and that although the man was evidently a Scotsman, he had never, to his knowledge, seen him before. This reply confirmed the King that the money must have been sent from some foreign Papists, and that the man was most likely a Scottish Jesuit or Seminary Priest, from one of the Scottish Colleges on the Continent, to whom it had been intrusted as the person most capable of furthering the object in view.

This story of the man with the gold, which Alexander Ruthven told the King, is not so improbable, nor was the King so foolish for believing it, as many assert. Nor yet is the freedom which Ruthven used, although he was said to be *out of his wits*, \* that is, deranged, is at all extraordinary. His connection with the court, and the office he held in it, brought him often into the King's presence; and indeed it is asserted, that he was purposely commissioned by his brother as a sort of *hanger on* there to convey to him intelligence, which

\* Adamson's Muses Threnodie, vol. i. p. 186.

he could easily do, on account of his own situation and that of his sister Beatrice, who was one of the Maids of Honour. I reject, of course, Mr Pinkerton's argument, that there was an intrigue between Alexander Ruthven and the Queen, and that James was stimulated by jealousy (with which, by the way, he was never much troubled) to destroy the Gowrie family. But the traditionary stories which the supporters of that theory maintain to be the evidence of the fact, certainly prove that young Ruthven was a favourite at court, and was accustomed to indulge in considerable freedom of speech. It would be rash, perhaps, to maintain that no intrigue existed between Ruthven and the Queen; but it is evident, that even the doubtful traditions, originating from unknown authorities, do not establish the alleged fact. It appears, therefore, that since James expressed no surprise at Ruthven's visit, nor at his story, that he was accustomed to the familiarity of the Master; and it must be observed, that the manners of the court, and of courtiers towards their sovereign, partook not of the refined politeness of modern times. But the story was calculated to make a very great impression on James, whose thoughts immediately reverted to the intrigues of the Seminary Priests. And that James had good cause to dread the intrigues of foreign papists, is placed beyond a doubt. It was only in 1592, that the Earl of Bothwell and the Master of Gray had assaulted the King in the palace of Falkland, those two personages being in the interest of the Court of Spain, who, exasperated at the defeat of the Armada, had never ceased in attempting to excite disturbances and conspiracies in England and Scotland. Accordingly, on the 5th of

January 1592-3, six months after the exploit of Bothwell at Falkland, which was on the 28th of June 1592, a proclamation was issued against "the coverit and bissy trauellis of Jesuitis, seminarie priestis, borne subjectis of this realme, and sum vtheris, strangearis, and their *tressonable conspiracie* for inbringing of strangearis *Spanzeartis*, in this realme, this next spring or somer." \* On the 5th of February that same year, the Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Sir Patrick Gordon, were denounced as rebels, on account of their connection with Bothwell in his intrigues with Spain; and on the 9th of March a commission was given to the Earl Marischall, constituting him the King's commissioner within the sheriffdoms of Kincardine, Aberdeen, and Banff, to "pas, searche, seik, and tak," those noblemen and their associates wherever they could be found within his jurisdiction. It is worthy of remark, too, as illustrative of Logan of Restalrig's conduct, that he also was engaged in this adventure; for on February 12th 1592, he was denounced as a rebel for not having appeared to answer "vpoun his tressonnable conspiring, consulting, trafficquing, and diuising with Frances sumtyme Erll Bothuill, in sundrie tressonnable purpoissis against his Maiesteis persone and authoritie." † It was in the year 1594,

\* Pitcairn's Criminal Trials, Part II. p. 281.

† It is worthy of remark, also, that on the 13th of June 1594, Robert Logan of Restalrig was again denounced as a rebel, for not appearing before the King and Council, to answer a charge at the instance of Robert Gray, burgess of Edinburgh, "makand mention, That quhair vpoun the secund day of Aprile last, he being passing in peceable and quiet maner to Beruik, for doing of cer-

that the intrigues of the Spaniards with Angus, Erroll, and Huntlie, were again discovered ; \* and in the following year, on the 21st of February, there was another proclamation issued regarding “ the Spanishe preparatioun to arryve in this island.” In short, the history of that period, previous to the death of Queen Elizabeth, proves, that James, like that princess, was continually harassed by the intrigues of the seminary priests, aided and abetted by the Popish nobles in the north, and it was, indeed, as plausible a story as Alexander Ruthven could contrive, to allure the King to Gowrie House, by telling him that he had accidentally secured a Scottish Jesuit or seminary priest in disguise, lurking about the by-

taine his lessum effearis and busynes, lippyning for na trouble nor injurie of ony persones ; treuth it is, that Johnne *alias* Jockie Houldie and Petir Craik, seruandes to Robert Logane of Restalrig, with three vtheris thair complieis, vmbesett his hie way and passage, besyde the Bowyrod ; quha not onlie reft and spuilzeit fra him *nyne hundredreth and fiftie pundis money* quhilk he had vpoun him, bot alswa maist cruellie and barbarouslie invadit and persewit him of his lyffe, hurte and woundit him in the heid, and straik him with diuers vtheris bauck straiques vpoun his body, to the graite danger and perrill of his lyffe,” &c. Logan failed to appear and present those persons who had committed this outrage.—Pitcairn’s Trials, Part II. p. 335, 336.

\* Pitcairn’s Criminal Trials, Part II., p. 310, *et seq.* and in particular the mysterious story of the “ Scottish Blanks,” in the pamphlet reprinted by Mr Pitcairn in Part II., entitled “ a Discoverie of Vnnaturall and Traiterous Conspiracies of Scottish Papistes against God, his Kirk, their native country, the Kinges Maiesties persone and estate. Set down as it was confessed and subscribed bee Mr George Ker, yit remaining in prison, and David Grahame of Fintrie, iustly executed for his treason in Edin., the 15. of Februarie 1592. ”

paths of Perth, with foreign gold concealed about his person.

The King gave implicit credit to Ruthven's tale, but proposed that he should send one of his own servants to Perth, with the Master, in order to receive both the pretended Jesuit and the money ; but to this Ruthven stoutly objected, protesting, that if his brother, or the magistrates of the town, knew any thing of the matter, the King would have a very bad chance for a share. Ruthven farther declared, that the only thing which induced him to ride straightway to Falkland and apprise his Majesty, was the very great love and affection he bore towards his sovereign, and the zeal he had for his service.

This and similar discourse took place " before the stables " at Falkland, \* during which time, the huntsmen had mounted, the buck had started, and the sport was about to commence ; but the King was so well pleased with Ruthven, that he frequently leaned on him, and " clapped him on the shoulder," exciting considerable interest among the attendants. At length James, seeing every thing ready, told Ruthven that he would consider of it during the hunt, and determine when it was over. This was by no means pleasing to Ruthven, who remonstrated at the delay, more especially as the King would have a good opportunity to investigate the business without attracting any notice if he set out instantly, as " the whole town would be at the sermon." But the King mounted his horse, and the hunt commenced. Ruthven,

\* Deposition of the Duke of Lennox.



however, who saw that he had made some impression on James, still lurked about, and immediately told Andrew Henderson, one of his attendants, to ride to Perth with all the speed he could make, as he loved the Earl of Gowrie, and inform him that he hoped he would prevail with the King to be at Perth in the course of a few hours ; adding, “ Tell my Lord, my brother, to prepare a dinner for us.” Henderson asked him if he would ride presently, to which Ruthven replied, “ No, stay a little, and follow me while I speak with his Majesty again.” The King, during the hunt, appeared frequently thoughtful and perplexed, and after a short time, finding a person riding beside him, he told him to call Ruthven, who having speedily appeared, when there were only a very few of the royal attendants present, James informed him that he had at length resolved to ride to Perth after the hunt. On this intimation, Ruthven ordered Henderson to depart with the utmost speed, and inform his brother of the King’s resolution.

Henderson immediately departed, and in the meantime the hunt continued. It lasted from about seven in the morning till after eleven ; during which time Alexander Ruthven scarcely left the King for a moment, continually exhorting him to finish the chase, that they might get “ the sooner to St Johnstoun.” The stag being killed, the King hardly stayed to witness what is called the *death*, but, mounting the horse on which he had hunted (for he did not get a fresh one till he was more than a mile from Falkland), he summoned the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, the Abbots of Inchaffray and Lindores, and some others, and told them he intended to set out instant-

ly to Perth, as he had some business with the Earl of Gowrie. Lennox and his friends immediately sent for fresh horses, and their swords; but the King took no sword with him, observing that he intended merely to ride to Perth, and would be back before the evening. While Lennox and the others were changing their horses, Ruthven got into conversation with the King, and was still addressing him, when Lennox rode up. By this time they were on their journey, some of the attendants having changed their horses, while others, who rode back to Falkland for that purpose, did not overtake the King till he was within a few miles of Perth; and it was imagined by many of them, that the object of the King's expedition was to apprehend the Master of Oliphant, who had been recently exciting disturbances in Forfarshire.

During the progress of the royal party, the King rode aside to the Duke of Lennox, and said to him, in his usual colloquial style, "Ye cannot guess, man, what errand I am riding for: I am going to get a *pose* \* at Perth, and Mr Alexander Ruthven tells me that he has found a man who has a pot full of gold of divers coins." The King then asked Lennox what manner of person he conceived Alexander Ruthven to be, who answered, that he "knew nothing of him, but thought him an honest and discreet young gentleman." The King now began to tell Lennox the history of the *pose*, when the Duke answered, "I like not that, your Majesty, it is not likely." Ruthven, however, who had perceived, with great uneasiness, the King and Lennox conversing together, and

\* Anglice, a *hidden treasure*.

had already expressed himself dissatisfied that so many attendants followed, now rode up to them, and earnestly requested the King to inform no one of the business, nor suffer any one to go with him till he had seen the man, and his treasure.

According to the account of this enterprise, published by authority, Ruthven's conduct on the road had excited some suspicions in James, more especially as Ruthven appeared peculiarly uneasy at the presence of Lennox and Mar. James therefore informed him, that he would trust the Duke and the Earl in more important matters than the present, and in a jocular manner observed, that, as he was "a bad teller of money, he behoved to have some one with him to help in that business." Ruthven's reply was, "that he would suffer no one to see it first but the King himself; afterwards, however, he (the King) might call in whom he pleased." Nevertheless when the royal party were at the Bridge of Erne, the King whispered to the Duke, what had passed, but added "tak tent [take heed] when I go with Alexander Ruthven, and be sure to follow me." He made the same observation to Lennox, when they arrived at Gowrie House.

It was observed, that when the King had left Falkland behind for a few miles, Ruthven sent his other attendant, Andrew Ruthven, in great haste to Perth before him, to inform the Earl how far they were on their journey, and when they would arrive. Henderson, the first courier, arrived in Perth about ten in the forenoon, where he found Gowrie anxiously waiting for him, in company with two persons of the name of Hay. Gowrie took him aside, and asked him what intelligence

he had brought from his brother, or if he had brought a letter. Henderson said he had brought no letter. "What answer then," asked Gowrie, "has he to me?" Henderson replied, that he was commanded by his brother to inform his Lordship, that the King would be there anon, and that he was to prepare a dinner for his Majesty; upon which Gowrie took him into a private apartment, and examined him more closely. He asked him how the King had received his brother, and Henderson replied that it was in a kind manner, and that he had often laid his hand on his shoulder. Gowrie next asked how many persons were at the hunt. Henderson replied, that he could not exactly say, but there were some of his own friends, and some Englishmen. He was next asked what noblemen were present, and he replied, that he saw none but "my Lord Duke." He was then dismissed, and ordered to return to Gowrie-House within an hour, during which time his Lordship probably went to the sermon, or "exercise."

At the time appointed, Henderson returned, and was admitted into Gowrie's presence, who ordered him to put on a coat of mail and other armour. Upon inquiring for what purpose, he received from Gowrie the summary answer, "I have a Highlandman to secure in the Shoegate." Henderson accordingly went to his own house, and, in obedience to his master's orders, arrayed himself in armour, and returned to Gowrie-House about half past twelve o'clock, when he was ordered by the Earl to carry up his (the Earl's) dinner, on account of the illness, real or pretended, of one of his servants named Craigengelt. Shortly afterwards Gowrie

sat down to dinner in company with three gentlemen, John Moucrieff, Laird of Pitcrieff, James Drummond, and Alexander Peebles, Laird of Findoune. It was after the first service during which Henderson was in attendance, that Andrew Ruthven, who had left the King's retinue with a second message to Gowrie from his brother, entered the hall, as if he had just dismounted, and whispered something to the Earl. Henderson soon after left the room, to bring up the second course; and while he was doing so, Alexander Ruthven entered the dining-hall.

It is necessary here to return to the royal party, who were during this time on their progress to Perth. It will be recollected, that the hunt at Falkland was not finished till after eleven o'clock, and that the Earl sat down to dinner at half past twelve, consequently it would be between the hours of one and two when the King arrived. When the King was within a mile of Perth, Alexander Ruthven left the party, and rode on before, to advertise the Earl of the King's approach.\* He entered Gowrie House with a person named Blair, just as Henderson was ordering the second course; and immediately the Earl, and those that were with him, rose from the table.† Henderson was desir-

\* Deposition of the Duke of Lennox, 20th August 1600.

† As it cannot be denied, that Gowrie was at dinner in his own house when his brother arrived, it is surprising that some writers should have strenuously insisted on the wedding-feast, at which Gowrie is said to have been present, and the surprise which he evinced, when he was told that the King was at Perth. On the contrary, the Earl appears to have evinced the utmost coolness and self-possession. It is rather singular, that he did not delay his

ed to put on his steel cap and gauntlet, though in complete ignorance of the purpose, except the explanation that Gowrie had formerly been pleased to give; for no one, it would appear, knew that the King was at hand, save the Earl and his brother. Gowrie now left his house, followed by Henderson; but instead of directing his course to the Shoegate, he proceeded towards the plain or common termed the Inch, which was on the road to Falkland. On perceiving this, Henderson threw his gauntlet into the kitchen, on the ground floor of the building, and sent home his steel cap; after which he followed the Earl to the Inch. There Gowrie met the King, Lennox, Mar, and the other royal attendants, and they all proceeded to Gowrie House. The Earl when he met the King, was attended by a number of persons on foot, between thirty and forty, whom he had collected for the purpose, among whom was Alexander Ruthven. The King's retinue hardly amounted to twenty in all.

The Earl conducted the King into the hall, attended by Lennox, Mar, and others. The first

dinner till the arrival of the King; but this may be accounted for from the circumstance, that the three gentlemen who were with him might be unexpected visitors, and it was not his interest to appear as if there had been any plot in contemplation. It is worthy of remark, that one of these gentlemen, Moncrieff, Laird of Pitcrieff, gave evidence against the Earl; and from his deposition it appears, that Gowrie had excused himself from attending a meeting of the town-council that day, and, even after the appearance of his brother, the Earl had never said that he expected any person, though he must have known of the King's approach from Henderson and Andrew Ruthven. Moncrieff grounds his evidence, doubtless, on Henderson's deposition; but it is to be recollected, that he was present at some of the facts to which Henderson deposes.



thing James called for was something to drink, as he was fatigued by his ride in a sultry day; and it appears, from the evidence of the Duke of Lennox, that it was not very expeditiously produced, probably on account of the confusion in the house, by the King's arrival. It was a full hour before dinner was ready. "The langsameness of preparing the same, and badness of the cheer," observes the account published by authority, "being excused upon the sodeine comming of his Majestie."\* While the dinner was in preparation, the King wished the Master to conduct him to the place where the pretended Jesuit was confined; but he was told that it would be soon enough after dinner, and this reply was accompanied by a recommendation not to appear over anxious about it, lest it should excite suspicion. From the Earl, the King, though he addressed him on various subjects, "could get no direct answer of him, but only halfe wordes, and imperfect sentences."

The dinner was at length produced, during which time the Earl was observed in a thoughtful state, frequently whispering to the servant, and

\* Patrick Galloway, a very excellent clergyman, in his sermon preached at the Cross of Edinburgh on the occasion, thus speaks of the dinner the King got from Gowrie. "The King gets his dinner, a cold dinner, yea, a very cold dinner, as they know who were there."—Note, *apud* Muses Threnodie, vol. i. p. 195. Cant ridicules the reality of the conspiracy from this circumstance. "But Gowrie," observes Sir Walter Scott, "might have many reasons to avoid appearing to expect the royal visit. The splendour of preparations for the King's reception must necessarily have attracted a degree of general attention unfavourable to the execution of any treasonable plan." Notes on Lord Somers' Tracts, vol. i. p. 313.

sometimes going in and out of the room. The King dined in the principal dining-room, the entrance to which was by the main staircase. This room, as has already been mentioned, was in the south-east corner of the building on the first floor, and its windows looked into the garden and commanded a view of the river. Adjoining to it was the hall, at the north-west side of which, near a large apartment, not destined to any particular use, was the *Black Turnpike*, leading into the court-yard. In this hall, it appears that Lennox and others of the King's attendants dined when the dessert was on the King's table.

No sooner had the King sat down to dinner, than Alexander Ruthven asked Henderson, for the key of the gallery-chamber, which was on the second floor, extending above the dining-room and great hall. Henderson said, that he had not seen it since his Lordship had come home; but the Master told him to get it from William Rhynd, which he did, and gave it to Ruthven, who departed with it. Meanwhile, Henderson, it would appear, waited on the King as one of the domestics, until the Earl told him in a whisper to go to the gallery-chamber to his brother. He proceeded thither, followed by the Earl through the "fair gallery" to the chamber, where they found the Master. Here Gowrie told Henderson to remain with his brother, and to do as he ordered him; then left the apartment, and returned to the King. Henderson now inquired what the Master wanted him to do, when the latter said, "You must go in here, and remain till I come back, for I will take the key with me;" and he pointed to the turret, which was at the north-

west corner of the apartment. No sooner had Henderson got into this turret, than he was locked up by the Master. \*

Let us now return to the first-floor. The King had finished his dinner, and was rising from the table, when the Master entered the dining-hall, and whispered in his ear, that it was now time to go and examine the treasure; but that he wanted to get quit of the Earl, his brother, and begged his Majesty would send him into the hall, to entertain his guests. The King now called for a pledging cup, and observed jocularly to the Earl, that although he had seen the customs of other countries, yet he (the King) would teach him a Scottish custom, as he was a "Scottish man;" for since he had forgotten to pledge his sovereign, and had not sat with his guests at table, he (the King) would pledge his own welcome. Gowrie was then desired to go into the hall, and pledge the company. The King now left the dining-room, and proceeded through the hall, where his attendants were drinking, and as he passed, he desired Sir Thomas Erskine to follow him, but this was forbidden by the Master. The King was then led by the Master up the *Black Turnpike* to the gallery-chamber, the latter taking care to lock every door behind him, till he came to the gallery, the door of which remained open; and he was overheard to say, as he locked these doors—"Now I have him secure, I think." He was at last led to the *turret*, in which Henderson was placed, the door of which being unlocked by the Master, the King

\* Henderson says in his second deposition, that he now "suspected some mischief was to be done, and he kneeled and prayed to God."

entered leaning on his arm, where the first object he saw was Henderson in complete armour, and was perfectly astounded at the sight. The door was now locked by the Master, who putting on his hat, and, turning fiercely on the King, said, "Sir, you are my prisoner; *remember my father's death*. Submit to me without resistance or outcry, or this dagger shall instantly avenge my father's death;" and he snatched Henderson's dagger, and presented it to the King's heart. \* Astonished and terrified at this sudden attack, the King attempted to speak; but was interrupted by Ruthven. "Hold your tongue, Sir," said he, "or by Christ you shall die!" The King was without a weapon of any kind, and had merely his hunting-horn suspended from his breast; but he at length said to Ruthven, "Mr Alexander, you and I were very great [intimate,] together, and as for your father's death, man, I was then a minor, and my council would have done what they pleased: † And farther, man, although you bereave me of my life, ye will not be King of Scotland, for I have both sons and daughters, and there are those in this town who will not leave it unrevenge." According to the King's account, he also reminded Ruthven how he had not only restored to his family "al their landes and dignities, but

\* Henderson, in his first deposition, says, that he threw the dagger out of the Master's hand, otherwise the King would certainly have been slain. He omits this fact in his second; but it is of little consequence, and does not invalidate his general testimony, which, fortunately, he gave both times with wonderful clearness and precision.

† The King was only seventeen years of age when the first Earl of Gowrie was beheaded.

also had nourished and had the upbringing of two or three of his sisters, as it were in his own bosome, by a continual attendance uppon his Majestie's dearest bed-fellow in her privy chamber." He also reminded him of the instructions he had received from that "holie man, Mr Robert Rollocke," assuring him that one day "the said Master Robert's soule would accuse him that hee had never learned of him to practise such unnaturall crueltie;" and he craved permission to leave the place, assuring the Master, on the word of a prince, that if he allowed him to go free, he would not mention to any one living his conduct at that time. Ruthven, however, answered, with an oath, that it was neither his life nor his blood which he wanted. Then, said the King, "Why do not you take off your hat," which Ruthven then did. "What is it ye want, man," asked the King, "if ye crave not my life?"—"Sir," replied the Master, "it is but a promise." "What promise, man?" asked the King. "My Lord, my brother will tell you," said he. "Then," said the King, "bring hither your brother." In this state of irresolution, the Master said, "I will; but, Sir, you will not cry, nor open the window till I come again." The King promised that he would not, and the Master left the turret, carefully locking the door behind him; first saying to Henderson, "I make you here the King's keeper till I return, and see that ye keep him upon your peril;" and to the King, "You must be content with this man as your keeper till I return." \*

\* Second Deposition of Andrew Henderson. A Discourse on the Unnatural Conspiracies, &c.

During this time, and while the King was in this distracting situation, his attendants below were becoming impatient. Gowrie had gone into the hall, as he was desired by the King ; and when the King's health was pledged, Lennox rose to follow him, as he had been commanded ; but he was told by the Earl, that *his Majesty was gone quietly upon some private errand*. Calling for the key of the garden, he conducted his guests thither by a staircase, which led, by a flight of steps from the south-east corner of the hall, adjoining the dining-room, into the garden. By this manœuvre, he conducted them to a different quarter altogether from that part of the large building in which was the King, they being at the east, and he being in the south-west angle of the house. As the King had declared that he was to return to Falkland that night, they had all their horses in readiness ; and while they were in the garden, one Cranstoun, a friend of Gowrie, who was afterwards executed for this desperate enterprise, came to them, and informed them that the King had gone to Falkland ; upon which they all rushed, with Gowrie, up the flight of steps into the hall, and, crossing it, ran down the staircase into the court-yard—calling for their horses. Gowrie also exclaimed, “Horse ! horse !” when Cranstoun said to him, “Your horse is at Scone ;” but Gowrie took no notice of this, continually exclaiming, “Horse ! horse !” Here they were joined by the Earl of Mar, and Wemyss of Pittencrieff, Gowrie's brother-in-law ; for those two, instead of accompanying Lennox and the others into the garden, had gone up the principal staircase into the “Fair Gal-



lery," on the second floor (at the upper end of which was the gallery-chamber, and in the round or turret where the King was locked up), and had remained there for some time, admiring its noble and spacious appearance. \*

Gowrie now said, "I am sure the King is always first; stay, my Lords, and drink, and I shall go into the house and ascertain if he be really gone." He then crossed the court or *close*, and went up the principal staircase; but soon reappeared, telling them that the King had really gone forth to Falkland by the South Inch; and, in the utmost hurry, called for their horses. By this time they were all near the front street, or Shoegate, before the chief entrance to the house; but some doubts having arisen, the Duke of Lennox asked Robert Christie, Gowrie's porter, if the King were really gone; to which he answered, "No." The Earl of Mar then said to the porter, "Billy [friend], tell me truly whether his Majesty is gone or not." Christie answered, "In truth, my Lord, he is not." Gowrie turned fiercely upon him, and said, "You lie, he went by the back gate, and across the Inch." "My Lord," replied the porter, "that cannot be, for I have the key of the back gate, and all the gates of the place, in my pocket." They all went out of the gate, into the street, deliberating and looking about for the King, when suddenly they heard a voice, as if proceeding from a struggle. "That is the King's voice," said Lennox, "be where he will."

Leaving Lennox, Mar, and the other attendants of the King in this state of surprise, let us return

\* Perth Antiquarian Society's Transactions, vol. i. p. 97.

to the turret in the gallery-chamber, where the King was locked up, after the departure of the Master. No sooner had Ruthven left the turret with the intention of consulting his brother, than the King turned to the man in armour, whom he had never before seen, and who stood almost motionless at the Master's outrageous conduct. "How came you here, man?" asked the King. Henderson replied, "As God lives, I am shot [thrust] in here like a dog, a short time before your Majesty's coming." "Will my Lord of Gowrie do me any evil, man?" asked the King. "I vow to God," said Henderson, "I shall die first." The King then desired Henderson to throw open one of the windows, and give the alarm; and he accordingly ran to the one which looked towards the Speygate; but the King exclaimed, "Fie! the wrong window, man!" This expression has been held by the sceptics in this enterprise, as quite conclusive that the plot was devised by the King, but when we recollect the situation of the turret, and the direction of the windows, every objection is visionary. The one to which Henderson ran first, looked directly away from the court-yard or *close* where the King certainly wished to give the alarm, towards the Spey-gate, in the direction of the Spey or Spy Tower, whereas the other looked directly towards the quarter where assistance could alone be procured. At the very moment when Henderson was attempting to open the right window, Alexander Ruthven entered the turret, and making towards the King, said, "By God! there is no remedy: you must die!" and having a *garter* or cord in his hand, he sprung upon the King with the intention

to bind his hands. James was unarmed, yet he scorned to submit to that indignity, and, closing with the Master, a struggle ensued. "I am a free prince, man!" he cried to Ruthven, "I will not be bound." While thus grappling with the assassin, he extricated his left hand, and Henderson pulled away the garter from Ruthven. The King "loupit free," and made towards the window, but the Master again grappled him by the *craig*, (throat) with his left hand, and placed his right *neeve* (hand) on the King's mouth. Henderson drew away his right hand from James' mouth, and, reaching over the King's shoulder, threw up the window; and at this time the King's voice was heard in the court-yard below. When Ruthven perceived this, he exclaimed to Henderson, "Wo betide thee, villain! is there no help from ye? We shall all die." He then attempted to draw his sword; but the King laid his hands on the hilt, and grasped firmly the hands of Ruthven, who drew back from the window, dragging the King to the middle of the turret. During this struggle, Henderson ran, and unlocked the closet, and also the door of the gallery-chamber at the head of the Black Turnpike, which the Master had also secured; and hearing a noise, and a rushing up the turnpike, he stood aside, the King and the Master still grappling each other.

When the King's voice was first heard by Lennox, Mar, and others, in the court-yard, all eyes turned to the quarter whence it proceeded. Looking up towards the window, they perceived the King wanting his hat, his face red, flushed, and a hand grasping his cheek and mouth. His cries were at that moment quite audible—"Treason!

treason !—help, my Lord Mar, help ! help ! I am murdered !” and a general rush took place from the court-yard towards the house. The Duke of Lennox, Mar, and some others, ran up the great staircase towards the hall, but there they found the door secured. Seeing a ladder, they got hold of it, and attempted to burst open the door, but it broke ; and though they sent for hammers, these were of no avail. James Erskine laid hands on Gowrie himself in the street, and Sir Thomas Erskine also grappled with him, saying, “ Traitor ! this is thy deed : thou shalt die !” But Gowrie answered, “ I know nothing of the matter.” A scuffle ensued, when the Earl, who carried two swords, or perhaps a dagger and sword, drew them both, exclaiming, “ I will either be at my own house, or die at the gate !” then followed by a number he ran into the court-yard.

While Lennox, Mar, and others, were battering the doors in the principal staircase, and assailing them with their utmost fury, Sir John Ramsay ran up the Black Turnpike, calling on Sir Thomas Erskine to follow him to the very top. Erskine was followed by Sir Hugh Herries, called *Dr Herries*, and others. Ramsay having ascended the turnpike, and, forced open the door, found himself in the gallery-chamber, the King struggling with Ruthven, and the man in armour standing at a distance motionless. By this time Erskine, Herries, and others, had entered ; and Herries cried, “ This is the traitor, strike him !” Ramsay accordingly made towards Ruthven, when the King, exhausted by the struggle, said, “ Strike him *laigh* [low], for he has ane *pyne doublet* \* upon him.” Ramsay, who was one of the

\* “ *Pyne doublet* was an under coat of defence, made of

royal pages, had a hawk on his arm, but he cast the bird from him, drew his sword, and stabbed the Master twice, while the King, making an exertion, threw him down the stairs of the turnpike. The rash youth fell, weltering in blood, exclaiming, "Alas! I was not to blame for this matter." His body was found by Erskine, Herries, and others, who attacked him with their weapons, and speedily despatched him. During the confusion, Henderson took the opportunity to escape.

At this very moment Gowrie appeared in the gallery-chamber, where the King had been rescued, with two swords in his hand, and a *knapshaw* or helmet on his head, preceded by his servant Thomas Cranston, and some others. Erskine, Herries, and Ramsay, attempted to stop their entrance when a scuffle ensued, during which Erskine was wounded in the right hand by Cranston; but Sir John Ramsay attacked the Earl, and stabbed him through the heart. Gowrie reeled, leaned on his sword, fell to the ground dead, and it was noted as a singular circumstance, that no blood came from his wound till his belt was removed; in which, when his person was rifled for papers, there was found concealed a number of documents containing magical characters. After the Earl fell, Cranston and the rest of his followers effected a retreat.

The King, thus rescued from the assailants, descended from the apartment where the affray had happened. But no sooner was it known in Perth that Gowrie was slain, than multi-

wire, to shield from the point of a dagger. It was worn by pions or foot soldiers." Note *apud* Arnot, p. 31.

tudes of persons collected before the gate of Gowrie House ; some for the King's relief, others attracted by the disturbance, and by the ringing of the town bell. The retainers of Gowrie rioted on the streets for several hours in the evening, and even after the King's rescue, made " certain irreverent and undutiful speeches against his Majesty. " \* Alexander Ruthven of Forgun, called out to the King, " Come down, thou son of Signior Davie [Rizzio] ; thou hast slain an honest-er man than thyself ; " and Craigengelt, exclaimed before the citizens, " Give us out our Provost, or the King's green coat shall pay for it. " The King, however, showed himself to the people from the famous turret, and, by repeated assurances of his safety, endeavoured to restrain the disorder. The town's-people, we are told, knew nothing of the matter till the bell rang, but it would appear that the tidings of the affair had speedily reached Dundee; (twenty miles distant) ; for " the town of Dundee, being advertised, came all upon arms, thinking to have spoyled the burgh of Perth, but praised be God, the King knew the town of Perth's part to be free. " †

The riot on the streets continued for some hours, principally excited by Gowrie's servants, who appear to have been well armed, and those of the citizens who were attached to him. While one party were exclaiming " The King is slain ! " and calling for " ane sight of the Kingis face ; " and " giff his Maiestie wes weill ; " the uproar

\* Act of Privy Council, requiring the magistrates and town-council of Perth to appear before the King at Linlithgow, 16th September 1600.

† Mercer's Chronicle, MS.



was most clamorous with the other party, by whom Gowrie was much beloved. Some vociferated, "Traitouris and Thievis!" others, "God send ane drap of grace to his Maiestie!" It appears from the depositions afterwards taken, when no fewer than three hundred and fifty-five persons, citizens of Perth, who were alleged to have been concerned in the tumult, were examined, that Alexander Ruthven of Forgum was seen running up the Water-gate, and before the House, with a drawn sword, exclaiming, "False traitouris! fy for powder! he is deid! he is slane! Thieves! ye are unworthie of sic ane Provost! and giff he leive, he sall remember on this day!" One called out, "Green-coats, he have committed murder!" and when he was reprov'd for this remark, he replied, "Ye are nocht gude nyctbouris in ane toune, that helpis nocht zour Prouest!" Others vociferated, "The Prouest is slane! thair is ane nobill man tynt [lost] this day! Wo worth this day forever!" A woman named Violet Ruthven, probably a relative of the Gowrie family, was observed by several of the witnesses examined, as being particularly active, and loud in her denunciations against the King, exclaiming, "Bludie boitscheouris! Tratouris! Wo worth [befall] zour green cottis! Bludie traitouris! that hes murderit thay innocentis!" Other women called out, "Gowrie had anew to tak meit and drink fra hame, bot he hes nane to revenge his deid." These and similar exclamations resounded through the streets, while the loyal parties were equally violent and anxious in their inquiries after James. Andrew Roy, one of the magistrates, who afterwards gave his deposition, was

particularly active in endeavouring to repel the disorder. It was he who commanded the common-bell to be rung. At length the loyalists succeeded in causing the populace to disperse, partly by threats, entreaties, and assurances that the King was safe.

As it would have been dangerous for James, during the continuance of this disorder, to have appeared in the public street, he departed about seven in the evening for Falkland, by a private door or gate towards the river, after having directed the magistrates of Perth to take charge of the bodies of Gowrie and his brother. It was late in the evening when the King arrived at Falkland ; but no sooner was the fact communicated to the inhabitants, than they all turned out of their houses, and welcomed their sovereign by the greatest demonstrations of joy and attachment. On the following day, August 6th, the privy-council in Edinburgh received an express from the court, and nothing could exceed the astonishment which pervaded the kingdom, when this daring conspiracy was made known. In Edinburgh, in particular, the citizens vied with each other in their expressions of loyalty for the King's deliverance. Cannons were fired, the houses were illuminated, bone-fires were lighted. On the top of Arthur's Seat a great fire was kindled ; the church-bells of the city sent forth their sonorous peals ; and all concurred in the public joy at the King's deliverance, save the ministers of Edinburgh, who not only refused to hold a public thanksgiving for the defeat of the enterprise, but even obstinately maintained, that there was no conspiracy at all.

The King arrived at Edinburgh from Falkland

on the 11th of August, and was joyfully received at Leith by a great concourse of people, and he now turned his attention towards an investigation of the conspiracy.

As Henderson had escaped from Gowrie House during the disturbance, and had not been recognised by any one, a free pardon and a considerable reward were offered to the individual who would confess that he was the unknown person in the turret. Henderson immediately came forward, and acknowledged that he was the man. He was imprisoned, and retained as a witness in the future proceedings.

On the 22d of August, a warrant was issued by the Justiciary Court, to bring Gowrie's three servants, George Craigengelt, Thomas Cranston, (brother of Sir John Cranston of that Ilk), and John Macduff, to trial at Perth. It appears that Cranston had been previously examined at Perth on the 6th of August, and Craigengelt at Falkland on the 16th. They were accordingly served with an indictment, and being found guilty as "*airt and pairt*" in the conspiracy, were executed on the 23d of that month. The charge proved against them was, that they drew their swords in defence of Gowrie against the King, during the disorder at Gowrie House; but they denied to the last that they had any knowledge of the conspiracy. On the 20th of August, a precognition of the conspiracy was taken at Falkland, when Lennox, Mar, the Abbots of Inchaffray, and Lindores, Sir Thomas Erskine, Sir John Ramsay, Andrew Henderson, and twenty-five other witnesses, gave their depositions. On the 22d September, an investigation was made at Perth in the

“New Kirk,” by the magistrates and council, in obedience to the King’s writ produced by Sir Robert Melville and Sir David Murray. Almost every individual of any consequence in Perth, was summoned to attend this investigation. It continued five days, and no fewer than three hundred and fifty-five persons were examined. They chiefly deponed to the riot on the streets, an account of which has already been given from their evidence.\* It may be observed, that one Francis Tennent was executed in October for writing “pasquils” on the subject against the King, addressed to the well-known Robert Bruce and another preacher named Davidson. On the 1st of November, Gowrie and his brother were *tried* according to the Roman law, which held that persons guilty of high treason might be tried after death; which practice was extensively followed by the Scots. Of course, it was a mere formality.

The various acts of the government afterwards, it is needless to recapitulate. The family of Gowrie, and various of their connections, were declared forfeited; and the surname of Ruthven was ordered to be abolished forever. Andrew

\* Some of their depositions are curious. One declared that he “was measuring coals all the time in the South Inch,” a second turned out “at the soond o’ the bell, bot stayed not;” a third was, “nocht that day in the toon;” a fourth was, “nocht thair;” a fifth “cam nocht;” a sixth was “sleeping at the time.” Some said they were at various places in the country; others were at the riot, but knew nothing about it; others, again, were pursuing their own affairs; a few described themselves as “auld men,” and that they “couldna gang out;” some deponed that they were *thair*, but that they were ordered *hame* by the magistrates, who threatened to “break their heids.” No farther explanations could be given of the matter.

Henderson was set at liberty, and restored to his office of chamberlain or factor; and, on the 19th of November, the bodies of the Earl and his brother were brought to Edinburgh, and hanged, drawn, and quartered, at the cross. Their heads were set up in Edinburgh, Dundee, Perth, and Stirling; it was enacted, that it would be high treason for any person to intercede for the Gowrie family; and the 5th day of August was appointed to be held ever afterwards as a day of public thanksgiving.

Thus the matter rested, without any elucidation of the mystery, till nine years afterwards, when an accident as strange as the plot itself occurred. One George Sprot, a notary in Eyemouth, having boasted among some of his friends, that he knew several particulars connected with the Gowrie Conspiracy, information was conveyed to George Home, Earl of Dunbar, who apprehended him at the instance of the Lord Advocate. After having been repeatedly examined by the Privy Council, Sprot gave in a declaration that he knew perfectly of the conspiracy, and of the correspondence between Gowrie and Logan. On that occasion, the letters of Logan of Restalrig, already alluded to, were produced.\* Both Logan and his agent, Laird Bour, were dead, but the same course was taken against the former, as against Gowrie and his brother. His bones were

\* Sprot confessed that he had known both Logan and Laird Bour, from the latter of whom he had received the first intimation of the conspiracy. It is curious to remark, that Logan's letters to Gowrie, which were found in Sprot's possession, appear to have been worn in the pocket for a considerable length of time.

dug up ; he was tried for high treason ; his estate was forfeited ; his posterity declared infamous. It does not appear that any proceedings were instituted against Laird Bour, who was probably too insignificant to attract attention. Sprout himself was hanged on the 12th of August 1609, at the Cross of Edinburgh, and his head placed on the Tolbooth beside those of Gowrie and his brother. Archbishop Spottiswoode, Dr George Abbot, (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), many noblemen, and the magistrates and ministers of Edinburgh, were present at his execution. He conducted himself on the scaffold with great penitence and devotion ; he informed the spectators that when he was thrown over the ladder, he would verify by a signal the truth of his confessions ; and accordingly, he thrice clapped his hands when he was suspended on the gibbet.

Fortunately, at the present day, we can reason and investigate facts, without those excitements of passion which characterized the turbulent and stormy reign of James in Scotland. It has been conjectured, that there was perhaps a double plot on the part of the Ruthvens ; and it may be safely concluded, that while the Master seems to have been stimulated by a determination to revenge his father's death, with Gowrie himself it was evidently a wild scheme of unprincipled and ill-concerted ambition ; and, though it would be rash to maintain that they intended to slay the King, they cannot be freed from the charge of concerting violence on his person. Indeed since the authenticity of Logan's letters are now placed beyond all question, it cannot be doubted, that the first object of the Earl and his brother was to secure the person of the King, by



conveying him to Fastcastle, that the whole influence of the Crown might be transferred into their hands.

But never was there a charge more atrocious, I would observe, in concluding this narrative, than that of ascribing to James the invention of the plot in order to accomplish the ruin of the Ruthven family. "Besides the placability and gentleness of his disposition," observes Sir Walter Scott, "and besides the consideration, that no adequate motive can be assigned, or even conjectured, for his perpetrating such an inhospitable murder, it ought to be recollected, that the King was naturally timorous, and could not even look at a drawn sword without shuddering; so that it is contrary to all reason and probability to suppose that he could be the deviser of a scheme in which his life was repeatedly exposed to the most imminent danger." "It has become fashionable," says Mr Pitcairn, "to ridicule the pusillanimity of James VI.; but it is hard to conceive how far the bravest man could have here surpassed him in courage, or could have displayed more coolness and address than did the King, throughout all this transaction. Although constitutionally and habitually timid, and this weakness aggravated in no small degree by the constant broils and conspiracies in which he was involved, James, on many occasions, showed, when personally placed in difficult emergencies, that he was not unworthy of the royal blood from which he was descended."





COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



0035522534

340

L44

BRITISH DO NOT  
PHOTOCOPY

APR 4 1929

